



Adjusting to the Emergent

A Process Theory Perspective on Organizational Socialization and Newcomer Innovation

Revsbæk, Line

DOI (link to publication from Publisher):
[10.5278/vbn.phd.socsci.00003](https://doi.org/10.5278/vbn.phd.socsci.00003)

Publication date:
2014

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Revsbæk, L. (2014). *Adjusting to the Emergent: A Process Theory Perspective on Organizational Socialization and Newcomer Innovation*. Aalborg Universitetsforlag. Ph.d.-serien for Det Samfundsvidenskabelige Fakultet, Aalborg Universitet <https://doi.org/10.5278/vbn.phd.socsci.00003>

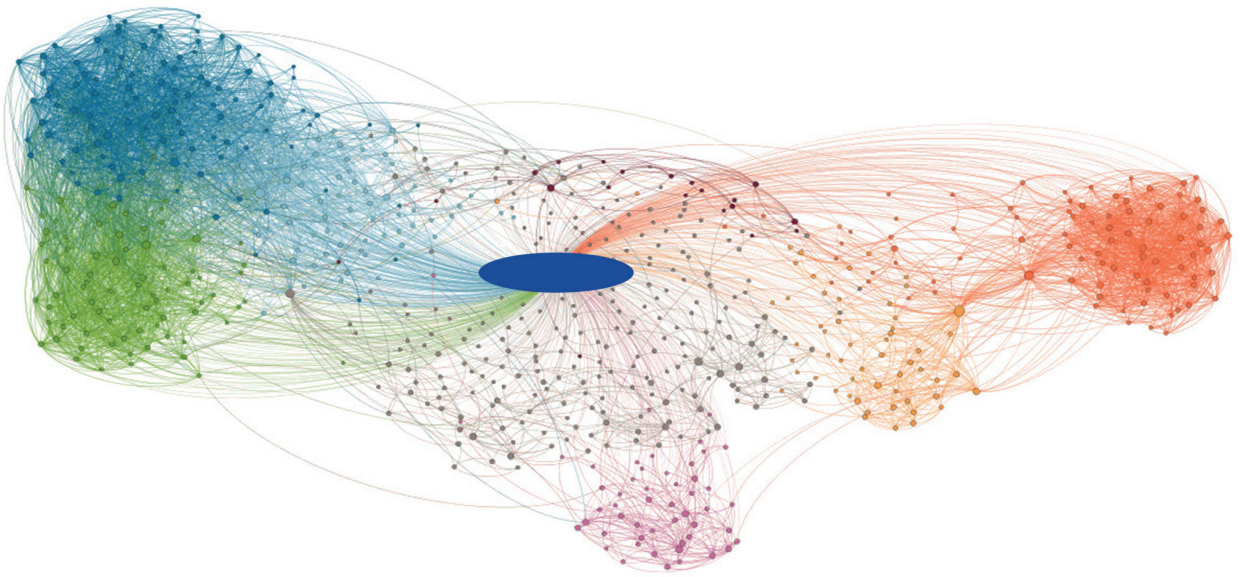
General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal -

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at vbn@aub.aau.dk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



ADJUSTING TO THE EMERGENT

A PROCESS THEORY PERSPECTIVE ON
ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION AND NEWCOMER
INNOVATION

BY
LINE REVSBAEK

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2014



AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

Mercuri Urval

ADJUSTING TO THE EMERGENT

**A PROCESS THEORY PERSPECTIVE ON
ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION AND NEWCOMER
INNOVATION**

by

Line Revsbaek



AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

Mercuri Urval

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Ph.D. degree.

December 2014

The research is cofinanced by Aalborg University and Mercuri Urval A/S

Thesis submitted: December 3rd, 2014

PhD supervisor: Associate Prof. Søren Willert, Department of Learning and Philosophy, Aalborg University, Denmark.

Second PhD supervisor: Prof. Lene Tanggaard, Department of Communication, Aalborg University, Denmark

Third PhD supervisor: Prof. Chris Mowles, Complexity and Management Group, Hertfordshire University, UK

PhD committee: Prof. Dr. Susanne Maria Weber
Philipps University of Marburg

Prof. Henry Larsen
University of Southern Denmark

Prof. Erik Laursen
Aalborg University

PhD Series: Faculty of Social Sciences, Aalborg University

ISSN: 2246-1256
ISBN: 978-87-7112-195-7

Published by:
Aalborg University Press
Skjernvej 4A, 2nd floor
DK – 9220 Aalborg Ø
Phone: +45 99407140
aauf@forlag.aau.dk
forlag.aau.dk

© Copyright: Line Revsbaek

Printed in Denmark by Rosendahls, 2014



CV

Line Revsbæk is a trained organizational psychologist with a master degree in psychology from Aarhus University. She is currently Ph.D. Fellow at the Department of Learning and Philosophy, Aalborg University, Aalborg, Denmark. As senior consultant in a private sector consultancy firm she worked in the fields of leadership development, change management, recruitment and selection and was responsible for developing and facilitating the company induction program. She has worked as management consultant with a variety of private and public sector organizations in Denmark and acted as personal coach for managers and executives.

Line's research focuses on organizational entry, employee induction, newcomer innovation, complexity theory and process philosophy. A visit to the Complexity and Management Group at Hertfordshire University, UK inspired her to introduce process theory into research on organizational socialization and take an autobiographic stance toward analyzing case study material.

She teaches and supervises bachelor, master and part-time master students in organizational behavior, organizational learning, strategic HRM, employee-driven innovation and employee induction.

Her own experience of being an organizational newcomer and socialization agent in her former job context, and advising customers on how best to facilitate the induction of their newly recruited employees, eventually sparked her research interest in the entry dynamics of work-related interactions between organizational newcomers and veterans.

“As a man adjusts himself to a certain environment he becomes a different individual; but in becoming a different individual he has affected the community in which he lives. It might be a slight effect, but in so far as he has adjusted himself, the adjustments have changed the type of the environment to which he can respond and the world is accordingly a different world. There is always a mutual relationship of the individual and the community in which the individual lives. Our recognition of this under ordinary conditions is confined to relatively small social groups, for here an individual cannot come into the group without in some degree changing the character of the organization. People have to adjust themselves to him as much as he adjusts himself to them. It may seem to be a molding of the individual by the forces about him, but the society likewise changes in this process, and becomes to some degree a different society. The change may be desirable or it may be undesirable, but it inevitably takes place”.

(G. H. Mead on *The Social Creativity of the Emergent Self*, 1934:215-16)

Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to explore and understand newcomer innovation that is related to organizational entry processes. The study challenges the prevailing assumptions in many standardized organizational induction programs, that consider newcomers as insecure novices needing to be “taught the ropes” of the organizational culture. The study thus investigates organizational entry in a changing organization.

Methodology: The case organization is a global Danish production company and the case study entries take place in company support functions in departments of HR, Legal and Supply Change Management. Data is collected in participant observations of company induction seminars and e-learning programs and in a longitudinal multi-perspective interview design exploring the experience of newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers from shared work-related interactions during entry. The case study materials are analyzed from an abductive, breakdown-driven methodology of *Analyzing in the Present*, which emerges as the case study analytical strategy in order to capture the rich dynamics of the interview stories of newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers generated in the multi-perspective interview design. The thesis makes a contribution to interpretive qualitative research methodology through understanding the implications of *time* and *temporality* for the practice of analysis. Contributing to current debates problematizing the notion of ‘data’, the researcher takes a radical reflexive, autobiographic stance toward analyzing conventional interview material making use of being the newcomer (researcher) researching newcomer innovation (of others).

Contribution: The study introduces process philosophy to research on organizational socialization and is the first to approach the organizational entry dynamics between newcomers and veterans from a complexity theory perspective of *complex responsive processes* (Stacey, 2010; 2011; 2012). The study suggests replacing the prevailing dichotomy of ‘newcomer assimilation’ versus ‘organizational accommodation’ that structure much research and debate on innovation related to organizational entry, with a notion of ‘*adjusting to the emergent*’. Identifying that newcomers orient themselves toward organizational change themes, ‘newcomer innovation’ is understood as the work-related act of newcomer that constitutes simultaneous socialization with regard to desired change and innovation of habitual practice. ‘Newcomer innovation’ is portrayed in different ways across the attached papers and the main thesis extending from unintentional innovation effects of newcomer’s proactive self-socializing behavior, to a possible inspirational basis for designing innovation-generating employee induction and to the notion of ‘resonant instances’ of newcomers enacting the organizational emergent.

Implications for practice: The study argues in favor of considering the local and informal socialization in work-related interactions between newcomer and veterans as a primary arena in employee induction. Early involvement of newcomers in the organizational practice and process of production is viewed a necessary prerequisite for the occurrence of newcomer innovation during entry. Employee induction is revitalized as a managerial responsibility, which is only to a limited degree potentially outsourced to company HR divisions. Raising awareness of the constitution of habitual practice in work-related interactions between newcomers and veterans, it is suggested that hiring managers, veteran coworkers and newcomers pay attention to *resonant instances* in which individual professional biographies are enacted as organizational practice thus contributing to variation in practice, possibly furthering change or consolidating continuity in the organization. Hiring managers who wish to further innovation related to the entry of newcomers may consider engaging their newcomers in strategically important work assignments and/or assignments aimed at innovating practice or simply previously unknown work assignments recently introduced into the department portfolio.

Implications for research: Whereas earlier research acknowledge the importance of the relationship between newcomer and veteran coworker and between newcomer and hiring manager for the socialization of newcomer, this study reveals *the relationship between veteran coworker and hiring manager* to be an important social ecology of newcomer entry. The study identifies the importance of shared habitual practice across organizational borders of employment and points out the implications of professional relational histories between the involved actors for the dynamics between newcomers and veterans. Professional relational histories and shared habitual practice across organizational borders is suggested as a focus of attention in future research on organizational socialization and employee induction.

Dansk resume

Formål: Afhandlingen udforsker 'newcomer innovation' i relation til nye medarbejders tiltrædelse i en forandringspræget organisation. Casestudiet udfordrer dominerende grundantagelser i standardiserede medarbejderintroforløb, hvor nye medarbejdere ses som usikre novicer med behov for uddannelse og træning.

Metode: Projektets case organisation er en global dansk produktionsvirksomhed. Seks konkrete tiltrædelsescases er inkluderet og afdækket igennem i alt 34 semistrukturerede kvalitative interviews. Medarbejdertiltrædelserne sker i virksomhedens støttefunktioner, for eksempel HR/personale, juridisk afdeling og Supply Chain Management. Data er genereret gennem deltagerobservationer af virksomhedens introduktionsseminarer og e-læringsprogrammer og gennem interviews af nye medarbejdere, deres organisationserfarne kolleger og ansættende ledere i et multiperspektivisk longitudinalt interviewdesign. Dataanalysen er abduktiv og sammenbrudsdrevet. Med henblik på at fremstille dynamikken mellem erfaringsberetninger fra henholdsvis nye medarbejdere, organisationserfarne kolleger og ansættende ledere betoner en her-og-nu situeret analysepraksis forskers refleksive associationer på tværs af det samlede empiriske materiale. Med den analysemetodiske praksis *Analyzing in the Present* bidrager afhandlingen til at forstå betydningen af *tidslighed* for kvalitativ, fortolkende analysepraksis. *Analyzing in the Present* beskrives som en radikal refleksiv og autobiografisk tilgang til analyse af konventionelt interview materiale. Som et aspekt ved den autobiografiske tilgang til interviewanalyse trækker forsker på egne oplevelser af selv at være ny (forsker), der forsker i (andres) beretninger om 'newcomer innovation'.

Bidrag: Afhandlingen introducerer procesfilosofiske betragtninger til forskning i organisatorisk socialisering og er det første studium, der undersøger dynamikken mellem nye og organisationserfarne medarbejdere ud fra det kompleksitetsteoretiske perspektiv om *complex responsive processes* (Stacey, 2010; 2011; 2012). Den herskende dikotomi mellem assimilation (af nye medarbejdere) versus akkommodation (af den ansættende organisation), som karakteriserer debatten om innovation i relation til nye medarbejders tiltrædelse, diskuteres og transcenderes med betragtningen om nye medarbejdere der 'tuner' sig ind på det organisatorisk emergente snarere end status quo. 'Newcomer innovation' beskrives som samtidig assimilation i forhold til organisatorisk ønsket forandring og innovation af konventionel organisatorisk praksis. På tværs af afhandlingens hovedtekst og vedhæftede artikler skildres 'newcomer innovation' dels som uuntenderede innovationseffekter af nye medarbejders proaktive selv-socialisering, dels som inspirationsafsæt for design af innovations-genererende medarbejderintroforløb og endelig som 'resonante hændelser' hvor den nye medarbejder handler på måder, der konstituerer det organisatoriske emergente.

Implikationer for praksis: Casestudiet understreger den uformelle socialisering i arbejdsrelaterede interaktioner mellem nye og organisationserfarne medarbejdere som en vigtig arena for medarbejderintroduktion. Tidlig involvering af nye medarbejdere i den organisatoriske praksis er en forudsætning for forekomsten af 'newcomer innovation' under medarbejderopstarten. Medarbejderintroduktion revitaliseres som en personaleledelsesopgave, der kun i begrænset omfang kan uddelegeres til virksomhedens HR medarbejdere. Gennem beskrivelsen af organisationskultur som et fænomen, der konstitueres og forhandles i arbejdsrelaterede interaktioner mellem nye medarbejdere, organisationserfarne kolleger og ansættende ledere, understreges vigtigheden af, at nye og organisationserfarne bemærker tilfælde af 'resonante hændelser', hvor den enkeltes professionelle biografi kommer til udtryk som specifik organisatorisk praksis og dermed bidrager til den variation i praksis, som enten understøtter kontinuitet eller forandring af organisatorisk kultur. Ansættende ledere, som ønsker at fremme innovation i relation til nye medarbejders tiltrædelse, opfordres til at tildele deres nye medarbejdere en strategisk vigtig eller hidtil afdelingsukendt arbejdsopgave og/eller en opgave, der har til formål at innovere organisatorisk praksis.

Implikationer for forskning: Mens tidligere forskning har belyst vigtigheden af relationen til nærmeste leder og til organisationserfarne kolleger for den nye medarbejders socialisering, peger det aktuelle case studium på, at *relationen mellem ansættende leder og organisationserfaren kollega* er en vigtig social økologi for nye medarbejders tiltrædelse. Studiet belyser arbejdskultur og professionel praksis som noget, der deles på tværs af organisatoriske skel og aktuelle ansættelsesforhold. Studiet påpeger betydningen af relationel historik mellem nye medarbejdere og ansættende ledere for dynamikken mellem nye og organisationserfarne medarbejdere. Arbejdsrelateret relationel historik og fælles arbejdskultur mellem entry-aktører på tværs af organisatoriske grænser foreslås som muligt fokusområde i fremtidig forskning om organisatorisk socialisering og medarbejderintroduktion.

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to Mercuri Urval A/S for co-sponsoring, with Aalborg University, the scholarship from which this research is done, and to old colleagues at Mercuri for believing in the project.

Thanks also to the “case organization” for participating in this research, for allowing me to interview newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers, and ‘try out’ the company induction practices myself. A very special thanks to the case company employees and managers participating in the case study. Your stories made a lasting impression on me. This research is as much yours as mine.

Thanks also to other case organizations that I visited, and to newcomers and veterans of those organizations sharing their experiences of organizational entry. Your stories were not focal to analysis but informed my inquiry nonetheless. And to students of the part time master programs on Public Governance and Leadership & Organizational Psychology at Aalborg University for their critical questions and lively reflections on the subject of my research.

Thanks to my research colleagues at the Department of Learning and Philosophy at Aalborg University and the research group on learning in organizations (CLIO) for sharing my enthusiasm about the project. Special thanks to Erik Laursen and Nikolaj Stegeager for editing my first paper and to Hanne Dauer Keller for commenting on an early draft of this thesis.

Thanks to Brian Bloch for competent proofreading of the main thesis, to Whitney Dunn for proofreading attached papers published in Danish and translated for the purpose of this thesis, and to Sine Martini for graphic expertise on the cover illustration. To Lærke Baadsgaard and Ida Jacobsen for their assistance on transcribing.

This piece of research was a long journey of coming to acknowledge that the method of inquiry was essentially one of bringing my own experience of organizational entry and newcomer innovation to resonate with those of others. This, I felt, was a risky way of going about research and one that did not link straightforwardly to established traditions of qualitative research. A handful of people became significant in supporting me, and I owe them very special thanks: Søren Willert, Lene Tanggaard, Charlotte Wegener and Søren Trolskov.

To my supervisor Søren Willert, for always being the supervisor I needed you to be. You have been part of my professional history from the very beginning: You were my first examiner at the Psychology Department at Aarhus University in 1997. And thanks to you, first year students in those days had to read through selected sections

of George Herbert Mead's *Mind, Self and Society* (1934). I continuously enjoy our talks on natural science history and causality, and on whatever we find ourselves to be engaged in, driving to work or touring conferences.

To my second supervisor Lene Tanggaard for mobile supervision on Highway E45. Thanks for helping me recognize that my practice of extensive and repeated listening to recorded interview material constituted a valuable practice of analysis. Working with you helped me realize that what we need most from our community others in order to qualify our work, is not a lecture on already prescribed rules, but recognition of those steps we dare tread outside mapped territory.

And thanks to the Complexity and Management Group at Hertfordshire University, Chris Mowles, Ralph Stacey, Nick Sharra, Karen Norman and Douglas Griffin and students at the 'DMan' for letting me join the Doctor of Management during spring and summer 2013. Special thanks to Learning Set members Shelly Gordon, Pernille Thorup, and Sigal Gill-More Feferman for sharing their process of research and commenting on mine. This gave me the opportunity to acquaint myself with *reflexive narrative inquiry* - the research methodology of their Hertfordshire community - which inspired me to develop my own methodology in terms of *Analyzing in the Present*. Special thanks also to third supervisor Chris Mowles for direct and honest response to my written work. Thank you for the questions I was unable to answer and which shaped my further inquiry.

To my parents, thank you for engaging so vividly in your lives. It inspired and taught me to do the same, and I have found this to be one of the more important skills that I have acquired. I owe you my confidence in my ability. You always made it easy for me to be an outsider whenever I found myself in such circumstances. After all, a leader is just an outsider happening to go a way that others might follow.

Thanks to my brother, with whom I share the joy of being a reflexive dilettante, always wanting to know everything about everything. We made a promise we swore we'd always remember. At times we looked stupid, but there was never a dull moment. You taught me the meaning of boot strapping.

And to my husband Søren Trolskov. If the wisdom of life could be measured in years, you would be 400 years old. I love you and our two newcomers, Magnus and Ronja. I only ever hoped to toss the ball as far down the field as possible, so that future generations can catch it and do with it whatever they perceive necessary.

This work is dedicated to the newcomers.

Table of contents

Abstract	6
Dansk resume	8
Acknowledgements	10
 PART 1 : INTRODUCTION AND FIELD	 17
1. Introduction.....	19
<i>The papers</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>The thesis.....</i>	<i>22</i>
2. Organizational socialization and innovation during entry	25
2.1 Questioning the dominant socialization discourse.....	25
2.1.1 Socialization versus innovation.....	26
2.1.2 Formalized induction and informal local socialization	28
2.3 Innovation approaches in specific studies.....	31
2.3.2 Induction as ‘change spaces’	32
2.2.3 Induction as ‘generative dance’	34
2.3.4 ‘Newcomer innovation’ in experimental work groups	37
2.4 Case study design and data collection.....	41
2.4.1 Case organization and case study entry cases	41
2.4.2 Data collection	41
2.4.3 Induction practices in the case company	43
2.4.4 The role of the entry cases in the process of analysis	44
 PART 2 : APPARATUS OF OBSERVATION.....	 47
3. Constituting an inquiry	49
3.1 Breakdown-in-understanding I: Questioning organizational unity and coherence	49
3.1.1 Case narrative: Prior acquaintance between newcomer and hiring manager.....	49
3.1.2 From nebulous organization to relational histories.....	52
3.1.3 Interview excerpt: Shared culture beyond organizational borders....	53
3.1.4 Established and Outsiders.....	55

3.2	Abductive reasoning and breakdown-driven research	57
3.3	Breakdown-in-understanding II: Questioning stability.....	60
3.3.1	<i>Newcomers entering a changing organization.....</i>	61
3.4	Resonating questions of research	62
4.	Theoretical perspective of Complex Responsive Processes	65
4.1	Complex adaptive systems as analogies of organizational life	65
4.2	Unity of process – taking up Norbert Elias’ process sociology	67
4.2.1	<i>The importance of historicity in a process theory perspective.....</i>	69
4.3	G.H. Mead: The ‘generalized other’, the ‘me’ and the spontaneous ‘I’	71
4.3.1	<i>The process of generalizing the attitudes of others.....</i>	71
4.3.2	<i>Remembering Mead’s ‘I-me’ dialectic in socialization theory</i>	73
5.	Methodology: Experiencing data, doing analysis	75
5.1	Taking a complexity stance in research practice.....	76
5.2	The role of theory in analysis.....	77
5.3	Being a newcomer researching newcomer innovation.....	79
5.3.1	<i>Autobiographic narrative: Being the possibly excluded</i>	79
5.3.2	<i>Case narrative: Negotiating cult values.....</i>	81
5.3.3	<i>Using autobiographic narratives to open up interview material</i>	83
PART 3 :	CASE STUDY ANALYSES.....	85
6.	Entry into a changing organization.....	87
	<i>Case narrative: Simultaneously identifying innovation and habitus</i>	87
6.1	Identifying global patterns of articulation across case study material	88
6.2	The organizational history of change	90
6.3	Newcomer voices entering the ongoing conversation	93
6.4	Identifying a case of ‘newcomer innovation’	96
6.4.1	<i>Veteran coworker storying newcomer contribution.....</i>	97
6.4.2	<i>Newcomer conveying his attitude towards the work.....</i>	98
6.5	Adjusting to the emergent	99
6.5.1	<i>Getting a sense of the emergent</i>	101
7.	Dynamics of the local interplay	103
7.1	Identifying power figurations in ongoing processes of research and relating 103	
7.1.1	<i>Case narrative: Becoming aware of inclusion/exclusion dynamics. 104</i>	
7.2	Figuration of interpretations.....	109
7.2.1	<i>Hiring manager’s story</i>	110
7.2.2	<i>Veteran coworker’s story</i>	112

7.3	Conflicting interpretations reflecting figurations of shared habitus	113
PART 4 : RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION		117
8.	Adjusting to the emergent.....	119
8.1	Adjusting to the emergent as an overarching pattern.....	119
8.1.1	<i>Adjusting to figurations beyond local interplay.....</i>	<i>120</i>
8.1.2	<i>Adjusting to the emergent as a newcomer constraint.....</i>	<i>121</i>
8.2	Becoming insider	122
8.2.1	<i>Spontaneous.....</i>	<i>123</i>
8.2.2	<i>Accepted</i>	<i>124</i>
8.2.3	<i>Situational</i>	<i>125</i>
8.3	Resonant instances	126
PART 5 : IMPLICATIONS.....		131
9.	Implications for practice	133
9.1	What to do?	134
9.1.1	<i>Assigning newcomers to a new task</i>	<i>135</i>
9.1.2	<i>Assigning newcomers to an important/strategic task for management 135</i>	
9.1.3	<i>Newcomer's task - a matter of innovation.....</i>	<i>136</i>
9.1.4	<i>Newcomer and veteran coworker working together</i>	<i>136</i>
9.1.5	<i>Anticipated importance of newcomer skills for the future success ..</i>	<i>137</i>
9.2	Attention to 'resonant instances'	137
10.	Implications for future research.....	139
10.1	Veteran coworker/hiring manager relationship: The ecology of entry ..	139
10.2	Web of professional biographies – shared habitus beyond organizational borders.....	140
11.	Conclusion	143
11.1	From newcomer innovation to 'adjusting to the emergent'	143
11.2	From 'newcomer' and 'veteran' to notions of 'being the possibly excluded' and 'enactor of the emergent'	145
11.3	Introducing a process theory for research on organizational socialization 145	
11.4	Researcher reflexivity: Being a newcomer researching newcomer innovation	146
Epilog		149

References.....	151
------------------------	------------

PUBLISHED PAPERS.....	159
------------------------------	------------

A. Employee induction: A contribution to organizational innovation (Revsbaek, 2011 – book chapter)	160
--	-----

B. Researching organizational entry from a perspective of newcomer innovation (Revsbaek, 2013a - conference paper).....	181
---	-----

C. The Ecology of Entry (Revsbaek, 2013b – journal paper).....	197
References	209

D. Analyzing in the Present (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014 – journal paper)...	211
---	-----

Appendix 1: Introductory letter for interviewees.....	237
--	------------

Appendix 2: Facts box on case study entry cases.....	239
---	------------

Appendix 3.....	243
------------------------	------------

PART 1 : INTRODUCTION AND FIELD

1. Introduction

I did not realize at the onset of this inquiry that the notion of *temporality* would acquire the importance it does in my study. And this with respect to the outcome of the case study analysis, the process of analysis and the theoretical grounds from which this work is written.

The published papers included in the thesis witness the progress in my thinking on the matter of organizational socialization and newcomer innovation during the process of research. I started out exploring the innovation potential of having newcomers enter employing organizations by articulating a counter discourse to the dominant assumption of organizational newcomers as novices in need of learning and assimilation. The latter is inherent in many organizational employee induction programs and much of the research literature on organizational socialization and employee induction (see also Chapter 2). My paper from 2011 reflects this line of inquiry. Encountering the reality of the case study case organization, I was surprised by the changing organizational circumstances into which the case study newcomers were entering. As a consequence, I engaged with the inquiry of how we can understand organizational entry in a radically changing organization. Initial case study analyses revolved around this concern (see Revsbaek, 2013b). In the final analysis presented in this thesis, I return to the notion of ‘newcomer innovation’, that is, understanding organizational socialization and newcomer innovation from a process theory perspective, and doing so from the case study material of specific entry cases in a changing organization.

Norbert Elias suggests, in the preface to his work on *The Society of Individuals* (Elias, 1991), which is a collection of his work on the matter across decades of writing, that “*an account of a relatively early stage of research on a fundamental problem has a value of its own, even though work on the problem has advanced further*” (Ibid.:ix). What I have come to know as the fundamental problem in my research on organizational entry is the relationship between the individual and the collective. Although not spanning decades, the three years of work that went into my current study *did* comprise a steep learning curve on my behalf on the matter of organizational socialization and the skills of interpretive qualitative research. Elias suggests that “*by being able to think through the limited earlier solutions, the reader is spared the difficulty of trying to understand the later ideas as if they had emerged from nowhere, without prior reflection, in the head of a particular person*” (Ibid.:ix). I hope that my choice of including the early papers of my research will aid readers in such a contextualization of my work. After all, what we say and do reflects the ideologies and traditions of thought that are known and available to us at

the time. Thus, the progress of this research was also a process of developing thought on the part of researcher.

The papers

The four papers included in the thesis are either already published or have been accepted for publication. The papers are attached to the thesis in the chronology of their publication. These papers are supplementary to (and historically preceding) the case study analysis presented in the main text of the thesis (Chapters 2 - 11). The following section is a short introduction to each of the papers and to how writing them furthered my inquiry into the field of organizational socialization and newcomer innovation.

Paper A: *Employee induction – A contribution to organizational innovation*

Original title:

Revsbaek, L. (2011). Medarbejderintroduktion – Et bidrag til organisatorisk innovation. In: Stegeager, N. & Laursen, E. *Organisationer i bevægelse, Læring – Udvikling – Intervention*. DK: Samfundslitteratur.

The paper appears as a chapter in a Danish anthology on organizational learning from the research community at Aalborg University on *Learning in Organizations* (CLIO) and is targeted at master students and organizational practitioners. The paper has been translated into English for this thesis.

This paper (A) is the first on the matter of employee induction and newcomer innovation related to the present case study (Revsbaek, 2011). The paper was written during the period of preparing and conducting the case study fieldwork and presents my initial framing of the innovation potential of having newcomers enter the organization, drawing on concepts of ‘newcomer innovation’ (Levine et. al. 2001; 2003), ‘practice-based innovation’ (Ellström, 2010) and ‘employee-driven innovation’ (Høyrup, 2010). The paper is an exploration of how we might think of organizational newcomers as organizational change agents and identifies changes in the discourse on organizational newcomers in the research literature on organizational socialization.

Paper B: *Researching organizational entry from a perspective of newcomer innovation*

Original title:

Revsbaek, L. (2013a). *Researching organizational entry from a perspective of newcomer innovation*. Conference paper, the annual DGfE Commission of

Organizational Education Conference on “Organization and the New”, Marburg, Germany, 2013.

The paper has been accepted for publication in the conference proceedings.

The second paper (B) describes my approach to *Researching organizational entry from the perspective of newcomer innovation* (Revsbaek, 2013a), explaining the various motivations for choosing a multi-perspective interview design to include newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers’ experiences of shared work during the period of entry. This paper presents the case study design considerations more elaborately than other papers.

From the case study empirical observation that organizational newcomers not only introduce innovation, but also enter into an already transforming organization, I realized I needed different theoretical conceptualizations than the simple dichotomy of ‘assimilation versus accommodation’ that structured the research on ‘newcomer innovation’ in work groups (Levine et. al. 2001, 2003). That is, if I was to explain the dynamics between case study newcomers and veterans and between the phenomenon of entry and the occurrence of innovation in an already changing organization. These considerations led me to adopt a complexity theory perspective of *complex responsive processes* (Stacey, 2010; 2011; 2012). The paper (B) on *Researching organizational entry from a perspective of newcomer innovation* (Revsbaek, 2013a) presents a first argument for the complexity theory perspective, although the argument is much advanced in the present thesis.

Paper C: *The ecology of entry*

Original title:

Revsbæk, L. (2013b). Modtagelsessamspillet lokale økologi. *Academic Quarter, special issue on Humanistic Leadership Research*, vol. 6, 175-186. DK: Aalborg University.

The paper was originally published in Danish and has been translated into English for this thesis.

A third paper (C) on *The Ecology of Entry* (Revsbaek, 2013b) witnesses my initial case study analysis from the complexity theory perspective of *complex responsive processes* (Stacey, 2010; 2011; 2012). The paper introduces the notion of ‘organizational temporality’ as a context of organizational entry processes. Furthermore, the paper is an initial presentation of the key theme of ‘relational histories’ among case study participants, which is more extensively elaborated in the present thesis text. The paper (C) on *The Ecology of Entry* (Revsbaek, 2013b) concludes by pointing toward the local interactions and dynamics between

organizational newcomers and veterans as an important arena in employee induction. The paper is a contribution to the debate on formal induction practices, versus informal learning positions of newcomer and veteran coworker. A possible discord between applied formal induction initiatives (such as mentorship) and actual learning interdependencies between newcomer and veteran coworker is described.

Paper D: *Analyzing in the Present*

Original title:

Revsbaek, L. & Tanggaard, L. (2014). Analyzing in the Present. *Qualitative Inquiry*, accepted for publication in August 2014.

The fourth paper in the thesis (D) on *Analyzing in the Present* (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014) outlines the methodology of analysis practiced in the case study. The paper supplements the case study methodology considerations presented in Chapter 5. The paper on *Analyzing in the Present* (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014) reflects my personal ‘crisis of representation’ (Flaherty *et. al.*, 2001) losing confidence in the practice of categorizing and coding data, acknowledging instead the rich experience of attending to the data by listening to recorded research interviews and understanding the instantaneous breakdowns-in-understanding (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). These are elicited from listening to interview recordings, as analyzing in the present allows a pattern of meaning across case study materials to emerge. Drawing on G.H. Mead’s *Philosophy of the Present* (Mead, 1932), this fourth paper (D) outlines the methodological development aimed at integrating a complexity theory stance towards analyzing conventional interview material. Taking a radical reflexive and autobiographical stance towards analyzing recorded material, the paper *Analyzing in the Present* (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014) is a contribution to methodology theory with respect to understanding the implications of *time* and *temporality* in the process of analysis.

The reader may (or may not) choose to read through paper D, upon reading about the case study methodology in Chapter 5, as the paper (D) on *Analyzing in the Present* and Chapter 5 on case study methodology *Experiencing data, doing analysis* supplement each other. However, these can also be read separately, as suggested in the thesis chronology. Using ‘autobiographic narratives to open up interview materials’ as described in Chapter 5 is a recent iteration of the notion and practice of ‘analyzing in the present’ (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014).

The thesis

The main text and final analysis of the thesis presented to the reader throughout Chapters 2 to 11 is the more recent case study analysis. Encountering the reality of the case organization raised the question of how we may understand organizational

entry processes in a changing organization. This question is answered in the case study analysis by inquiring into:

How may we understand organizational entry, socialization and newcomer innovation in a changing organization from a process theory perspective?

As with each of the attached papers, the main thesis text is a complete inquiry in its own and can be read as such. As indicated in the above sections, the final case study analysis reflects the history of inquiry as can be discovered from the attached papers. The reader will inevitably find some redundancy across the individual papers, particularly with regard to the review of research on organizational socialization. The entry cases referred to in the analysis of the papers and the thesis are in fact the same six (marked as such in both papers and thesis). The analysis of organizational entry processes from these entry cases clearly develops from paper to paper and to the final text of this thesis.

Appendix 1 is the introductory letter to interviewees explaining the aim of the case study and asking for their informed consent. *Appendix 2* is a fact box on each of the six case study entry cases from the participating case organization. *Appendix 3* is targeted to the doctoral evaluation committee and concerns the choice of attaching interview recordings to the thesis submission, rather than interview transcriptions. Otherwise, the second appendix is only of interest to those readers with a special concern about the politics of research.

Reading through my final text of the main thesis, I sometimes feared that the reflexivity in the work weakened the clarity of the narrative. But the choice was never to omit reflexivity. Instead, I aimed at writing and re-writing the story, inclusive of the researcher's reflexive voice. After all, "*the magic of telling impressionist tales is that they are always unfinished. With each retelling, we discover more of what we know*" (Van Maanen, 2011:120). I learned the same to be true also of *Analyzing in the Present* (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014). My reader will be the judge of whether or not I succeeded in such clarification.

2. Organizational socialization and innovation during entry

2.1 Questioning the dominant socialization discourse

Organizational socialization has always been about continuity and change in organizational life (Tuttle, 2002). *“The stability and productivity of any organization depends in large measure upon the ways newcomers to various positions come eventually to carry out their tasks”* (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979:215). Although acknowledging that organizational socialization is about continuity *and* change, and realizing that the entry of newcomers holds innovation potential for the employing organization, the discourse in research on organizational socialization largely heralds the *raison d’être* of organizational socialization as preserving the culture of the organization from one generation of employees to the next (Ibid.). *“At heart, organizational socialization is a jejune phrase used by social scientists to refer to the process by which one is taught and learns ‘the ropes’ of a particular organizational role”* (Ibid.:211). A recent handbook on the research literature of organizational socialization reflects on the dominant focus on ‘newcomer learning’ and ‘assimilation’ in the organizational socialization research:

“Organizational socialization is defined as the process through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors required to adapt to a new work role” (Wanberg, 2012:17).

Since Van Maanen and Schein’s seminal paper in 1979, organizational socialization has been about work-related transitions from one work role to another and this either *between* organizations or role transitions *within* an organization, or (most often) studied empirically in relation to organizational newcomers. The above definition from Wanberg reflects the dominant discourse on organizational socialization, emphasizing newcomers as ‘learning subjects’ and socialization as assimilation. It is increasingly argued that such an emphasis in organizational socialization research is ‘one-sided’: One-sided in focusing exclusively on newcomer’s experienced uncertainty and learning, neglecting that of organizational veterans (see Gallagher & Sias, 2009; also Revsbaek, 2013a). And one-sided in considering organizational entry processes in terms of newcomer assimilation (socialization-as-assimilation),

rather than in terms of organizational accommodation, that is, innovation: “*much of the work on organizational socialization still reflects a narrow social perspective: perhaps because of their focus on newcomers, researchers have emphasized how workers adapt to organizations, rather than the reverse*” (Moreland, Levine & McMinn, 2001:88; see also Feldman, 2012). By their statement, Moreland, Levine and McMinn put words to the prevailing dichotomy between ‘socialization’ and ‘innovation’ in the research field of organizational socialization. Either newcomers ‘assimilate’ to the organizational way of doing things (which we might label socialization-as-assimilation) or the organization ‘accommodates’ (adjusts) individual’s desires (for which Moreland and his colleagues take up the term ‘innovation’; see Levine *et. al.*, 2001). As Moreland, Levine and McMinn thus make clear, the majority of research in the field of organizational socialization focuses on newcomer socialization-as-assimilation, rather than on innovation (Moreland *et. al.*, 2001, see also Daskalaki, 2012; Feldman, 2012).

2.1.1 Socialization versus innovation

The reader might find an additional sorting of terminology helpful. As Kramer (2010) observes, the terminology in the research literature on organizational socialization regarding *socialization versus innovation* varies a great deal across individual researchers. Thus, the notion of ‘socialization’ is sometimes used in the sense of *organizational influence on the newcomer*, that is, ‘*socialization-as-assimilation*’ of the newcomer (which is the terminology I suggest in the above paragraph). Alternatively, the notion of ‘socialization’ is used as an overarching concept inclusive of both *assimilation* (of newcomer) and *accommodation* (of organization) labeling *the overall process* of a newcomer taking up work in a new role/organization, thus including the influence of newcomer on the employing organization and vice versa.

Kramer himself, using a perspective of ‘uncertainty management’ for understanding newcomer information-seeking behavior (Kramer, 2004), adheres to Jablin’s terminology (Jablin, 2001) of *socialization* as “*the process by which an organization attempts to influence and change individuals to meet its needs*” (Kramer 2010:3) and *individualization* as “*the process by which individuals attempt to change organizations to meet their needs*”. Closer to, and in fact inspiring, the vocabulary employed in this thesis, Moreland and Levine (2001) use the notion of socialization to label “*the overall process of joining groups*” (Kramer 2010:5) differentiating between *assimilation* and *accommodation*, where *assimilation* is “*the extent to which a group is able to alter the individual*” (Ibid.) and *accommodation* is “*the degree to which an individual is able to alter the group*” (Ibid.). We see a distinction in these terminologies, also reflecting a distinction between overtly cognitive approaches in explaining proactive newcomer behavior emphasizing ‘newcomer needs’ (i.e. Kramer, 2010; 2004) and more social psychological approaches emphasizing the ‘negotiation’ between newcomers and veterans (e.i. Levine *et. al.*, 2001; 2003).

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) also consider socialization as an overall process of learning ‘the ropes’ of the role toward which newcomers might respond in either ‘custodial’ or ‘innovative’ ways, depending on the type of socialization tactics practiced by the employing organization. A ‘custodial role response’ means newcomers responding in ways of assimilating themselves, and an ‘innovative role response’ means that newcomers respond in ways that enable the organization to accommodate.

Following these conceptual distinctions, I use the notion of ‘socialization’ in two ways in this text. One is socialization in the sense of *assimilation of newcomers*. This is what I, for the sake of explanation, choose to call ‘socialization-as-assimilation’. Related to this, I use the notion of ‘innovation’ in the sense of *accommodation of the employing organization*, or more accurately I talk of ‘veteran coworkers’ and ‘managers’, rather than ‘the organization’.

Once in a while, I use the term ‘socialization’ in another way, namely to label the overall process of newcomers taking up work in the collective, as we have also seen in Van Maanen and Schein (1979) and Moreland and Levine (Moreland & Levine, 1985; Levine et. al., 2001; 2003) do. Given that I suggest the notion of ‘adjusting to the emergent’ as a concept of the overall socialization and entry process, I argue that the notion of ‘adjusting to the emergent’ replaces the otherwise widely practiced dichotomy of (newcomer) ‘socialization-as-assimilation’ and (organizational) ‘innovation’. I discuss this conceptual contribution of my research in Chapter 8.

The use of vocabulary concerning these processes of *socialization versus individualization* (Kramer, 2010; Jablin, 2001) or *assimilation versus accommodation* - and even identifying them as separate ‘processes’ (Kramer, 2010) or ‘role responses’ (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) - reflects a conceptual *dichotomy* between newcomer assimilation and accommodation on behalf of organizational veterans during organizational entry. As Kramer rightly points out, many scholars in the field of organizational socialization refer to these distinctions as ‘theories’, when in fact “*they are simply heuristic models that describe a common phenomenon*” (Kramer, 2010:10). Kramer goes on to explain: “*Much of the research is descriptive, consisting of typologies and explanations, but lacking any coherent theoretical perspective to explain the overall process*” (Ibid.).

My argument is that on the one hand, we practice and research employee induction, over-emphasizing ‘socialization-as-assimilation’ and not attending to the innovation potential of newcomer entries and in doing so, neglecting the impact of entry on organizational veterans. On the other hand, we are familiar with theoretical frameworks, such as that of George Herbert Mead’s quoted in the thesis introduction on “the creativity of the social self” (Mead, 1934:215-216), emphasizing the emergent nature of any social collective, acknowledging “*the mutual relationship of the individual and the community*” (Ibid.:215) and keeping in mind that “*it may*

seem to be a molding of the individual by the forces about him, but the society likewise changes in this process, and becomes to some degree a different society” (Ibid.:216).

Yet, such ‘constitution theories’ (Joas, 1996) as that of Mead’s - although claimed to be the point of reference in theory on organizational socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) - do not seem to inform either current induction practices or current research in organizational socialization and employee induction to a very large degree (with a few exceptions to be elaborated in a later section, see for example Sprogøe & Elkjaer, 2010). Instead, the main assumption is still that *“the influence of the organization upon the individual peaks during passage, whereas the individual’s influence upon the organization peaks well after and well before any further movement”* (Schein & Van Maanen, 1979:224-225).

In the paper *Researching organizational entry from a perspective of newcomer innovation* (Revsbæk, 2013a), I have argued for considering processes of entry and socialization as a shared social phenomenon between newcomers and veterans, and suggest designing empirical studies from a perspective of newcomer innovation as a way of achieving this.

2.1.2 Formalized induction and informal local socialization

As Saks and Gruman (2012) point out, most research on organizational socialization has been with regard to ‘socialization tactics’ or ‘people processing devices’ as Van Maanen and Schein (1979) also refer to them, based on Van Maanen’s earlier work (Van Maanen, 1978). Such ‘onboarding’, as is the preferred term in many practice-oriented outlets (Wanberg, 2012), *“refers to the specific practices initiated by an organization or its agents to facilitate employee adjustment to new roles”* (Ibid.:18). Many organizational induction practices are modeled in terms of ‘onboarding seminars’, ‘mentor relationships’ and increasingly also as ‘e-learning programs’. Onboarding seminars tend to be designed either as general orientation programs introducing newcomers to organizational values and goals, or as skill-oriented seminars presenting company IT toolboxes or safety procedures (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Most often, such formalized induction practices operate from an assumption of the organizational newcomer as a novice, lacking knowledge and needing to be educated and guided.

Van Maanen and Schein’s approach to organizational socialization, describing *“a set of interrelated theoretical propositions about the structure and outcomes of organizational socialization processes”* (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979:214), on which research into such induction practices is mostly based, has been considered as a managerial approach and criticized for treating newcomers as largely ‘passive recipients’ of organizational socialization efforts, suggesting that certain socialization practices lead to specific role responses on behalf of newcomer (see also Revsbæk, 2011).

“Novices bring with them different backgrounds, faulty preconceptions of the jobs to be performed within the setting, including their own, and perhaps values and ends that are at odds with those of the working membership. The more experienced members must therefore find ways to insure that the newcomer does not disrupt the ongoing activity on the scene, embarrass or cast a disparaging light on others, or question too many of the established cultural solutions worked out previously. Put bluntly, new members must be taught to see the organizational world as do their more experienced colleagues if the traditions of the organization are to survive. The manner in which this teaching/learning occurs is referred to here as the organizational socialization process.” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979:211)

This quote from Van Maanen and Schein exemplifies the *assimilation* discourse that is still prominent in the field: It devolves on the ‘more experienced members’ of the organization to ‘find such ways to *insure*’ that newcomers do not disrupt, and newcomers “*must be taught to see the world as do their more experienced colleagues*” (Ibid., my underscore). The innovation potential of having newcomers enter the organization is portrayed as being ‘disruptive’ to what is presumably a stable and smooth organizational operation, and the induction practices are considered as finding “*ways to insure that the newcomer does not disrupt*” (Ibid.).

Further illustrating the one-sided focus on newcomer assimilation in research on organizational socialization, and reflecting that to a large degree “*the theoretical and conceptual underpinning of socialization research is uncertainty reduction theory*” (Saks & Gruman, 2012:28), the following quote from a recent review on organizational socialization sums up how the ‘*newcomer experience*’ upon entry is described in the research literature:

”They [organizational newcomers] are unsure of their role and how well they will perform their job. They are unaware of the appropriate and acceptable ways of behaving in the organization. In effect, they are like strangers in a strange land who must learn how to think, behave, and interact with other members of the organization if they are to become accepted and effective members themselves” (Saks & Gruman, 2012:27).

Actually, my experience suggests reveals that this *is* to some degree a valid description of how many organizational newcomers feel, and I would agree that they have to “*learn how to think, behave, and interact with others*” (Ibid.). But something happens when we read and understand these considerations in the light of the highly *educational practices* of induction programs practiced in many large

companies. Daskalaki (2012) reports on such standardized educational practices of employee induction in her case study on organizational induction:

“The newcomers were sitting at desks arranged in long rows. A whiteboard, TV, and VCR were normally placed next to the trainers’ desk. The trainer was sitting at the front facing the newcomers (arrangement that can be compared to traditional classroom arrangements)... The trainer later joked about ‘the students who will miss the class today’.” (Daskalaki, 2012:100)

Characterizing newcomers mainly in terms of high degrees of experienced uncertainty, insecurity and anxiety, and in need of acquiring information to reduce their experienced anxiety, reinforces the dominant discourse on organizational entry and socialization as a ‘newcomer learning’ and ‘newcomer assimilation’ discourse.

Daskalaki points out that much of the research on socialization practices has been conducted with reference to school-to-work newcomers, that is, occupational novices and not work-to-work newcomers with some degree of occupational expertise (Daskalaki, 2012). *“With a few exceptions (...) the new employees are portrayed as a group of absolute beginners experiencing stress, isolation and role confusion”* (Ibid.:97). Apparently, structured and formalized induction programs have more significance for the socialization of those organizational newcomers who are also professional novices (school-to-work newcomers) and less so with newcomers who are experienced (work-to-work newcomers) (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). In addition, formalized induction programs appear most effective for socialization if they occur during the first six months of newcomer employment (Saks & Gruman, 2012). Contrariwise, when newcomers are asked to rate the most helpful socialization factors, they report that interactions with veteran coworkers and supervisors/managers are of more importance than formalized and structured orientation programs (Louis *et. al.*, 1983; Saks & Gruman, 2012). Such observations lead Ashford and Nurmohamed to conclude that *“some of the most important socialization is decidedly local”* (Ashford & Nurmohamed, 2012:16).

To contrast the focus on induction practices (onboarding) in the majority of research on organizational socialization, Wanberg suggests reserving the notion of ‘organizational socialization’ to capture *“the broader learning and adjustment processes that individuals go through when they adapt to a new role”* (Wanberg, 2012:18). Furthermore, Van Maanen and Schein themselves distinguish between ‘socialization tactics’ and ‘socialization’: *“The degree to which any one tactic is used by an organization is not in any sense a ‘natural’ or prerequisite condition necessary for socialization to occur. In other words, socialization itself always takes place at boundary transitions by some means or other”* (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979:231).

Ashford & Nurmohamed conclude in their field review that “*despite the recognition of interpersonal and group interactions as being heavily responsible for successful socialization, there is still much to be learned in this area*” (Ashford & Nurmohamed, 2012:16). They continue that organizational socialization research either focuses too broadly on ‘socialization tactics’, thus neglecting attention to coworkers and managers as everyday immediate sources of socialization, or focuses too narrowly on the ‘proactive behavior’ of the newcomer, thus neglecting the local context in which this takes place (Ibid.). Ashford and Nurmohamed suggest “*additional theorizing about the local context has the potential to open up new questions and generate new insights for the socialization literature*” (Ashford & Nurmohamed, 2012:16). I claim that the research presented in this thesis provides an understanding into such local context of newcomer socialization and possible newcomer innovation.

The current case study differs from existing research in the field of organizational socialization in three distinct ways. It focuses on:

- The experiences of *both newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers* during the period of entry
- *Organizational innovation* during entry and not just newcomer socialization-as-assimilation
- *Local socialization* in work-related interaction between newcomers and veterans, rather than formalized induction practices.

Additionally, the study applies qualitative interpretive research methodologies in a research field where the majority of studies are based on quantitative methodologies, and inquires into organizational entries of work-experienced newcomers, that is, work-to-work newcomers and not novices to the profession.

2.3 Innovation approaches in specific studies

Although the impact of entry processes on organizational veterans remains insufficiently researched (Feldman, 2012), an increasing number of studies in the field of organizational socialization are explicitly highlighting the innovation potential in organizational entry processes (for example Ashforth et. al., 2007; Daskalaki, 2011; Sprogøe & Elkjaer, 2010; also Levine. et. al., 2001; 2003; Hansen & Levine, 2009). In this section, I present some recent studies doing just this.

Two of the studies are about *organizational* entry and emphasize the innovation potential of employee induction, much as I do in mine. Closing the presentation of each study, I discuss similarities and differences between the presented study and the work in this thesis. A third group of experimental studies concern newcomer innovation in ad hoc work groups, from which the notion of ‘newcomer innovation’ informing my research design originates. I present the work of Moreland, Levine and colleagues before describing my case study design and data collection.

2.3.2 Induction as ‘change spaces’

Daskalaki (2012) reports a study of employee induction practices across ten organizations, conducted over a period of five years. All ten companies are situated in a single labor market in a specific geographic region, thus enabling Daskalaki to observe and consider the impact of this organization-external factor of labor market characteristics on organizational induction. The labor market she studies is characterized by low unemployment and the circulation of labor between and within sectors, making up a population of organizational newcomers who are essentially more work-experienced than the average novice newcomer generally studied in research on employee induction (Ibid.). *“High labor mobility, casualization of work, and acquisition of transferable skills have all resulted in highly knowledgeable and sophisticated newcomers”* (Daskalaki, 2012:107).

This divergence from the average novice newcomer that is assumed in the research literature constitutes a particular environment for studying and practicing organizational entry and induction. Although the population of newcomers is different, the induction practices are designed mainly from the same best practice standards constructed to meet the needs of novice newcomers: *“Yet despite the fact that the organizations studied clearly operated in different environments to the ones described in prior studies on induction, with newcomers being mostly experienced and rather sophisticated, they still adopted standardized, best practice induction designs hoping to reduce in that way early voluntary exits”* (Ibid.:98). Daskalaki argues that we should approach and research employee induction *“as a broader organizational and labor market phenomenon”* (Ibid.), stating that previous research has failed to put *“newcomers’ prior experiences and labor markets in the center of the analysis of new employee induction”* (Ibid.).

Daskalaki’s arguments are relevant to the case study that I present in this thesis. The Danish labor market is characterized by high job mobility, in fact the second highest in the EU following United Kingdom (Andersen et. al., 2008:21), which is often explained by reference to the Flexicurity Model of the Danish labor market (Ibid.). In two of the six entry cases I studied in the Danish case organization, the entry case newcomer and hiring manager knew each other prior to newcomer’s entry, from having been colleagues in a former workplace. As we shall see, this raises the question of organizational entries also being processes of relating and shared habitus across organizational borders (see case study narratives in Chapters 3 and 7). Daskalaki’s suggestion to consider employee induction a cross-organizational labor market phenomenon serves as a reminder.

In her re-conceptualization of induction as an organizational ‘change space’, Daskalaki opens up the social category of ‘organizational newcomers’, suggesting that we think in terms of *“sophisticated newcomers”* and *“rebellious trainers”* (Daskalaki, 2012:96) when considering *“the role that new entrants can play in organizational change and development initiatives”* (Ibid.:109). The dominant use

of terminology in the research literature refers to categories of ‘newcomers’ and ‘veterans’/‘oldtimers’ or ‘socialization agents’ implying these to be homogenous groups. Yet, Daskalaki differentiates further into five groups of actors involved in formal induction processes: 1) “*green newcomers*”, that is, novice newcomers, 2) “*early newcomers*”, that is, people with prior work experience but having recently entered the employing organization, 3) “*senior trainers*”, most often HR partners facilitating the induction program, 4) “*other trainers*”, for example line managers or company directors guest lecturing induction seminars, and 5) “*organizational incumbents*”, that is, veteran organizational members not participating in the formal induction seminars, but often encountered during lunch and coffee breaks or tours around the company (Ibid.:101). Although arguing that they should be re-contextualized, Daskalaki maintains a focus on formalized induction practices: “*Instead of assuming managerial dominance (compliance) and cultural homogenization (acculturation), customized, new employee-driven and context-dependent induction processes ought to signal an organizational opportunity space*” (Ibid.:109).

From a document analysis and structured interviews of company managers, Daskalaki finds that “*management maintains idealized views of organizational induction*” (Ibid.:100) reflecting assumptions of compliance, standardization and acculturation. By this she means an idealized view of induction, in which it is assumed that socialization agents are naturally representatives on behalf of management, that standardized best practices on induction can be “*unequivocally adopted*” (Ibid.) across organizations and that the organizational setting which newcomers enter is understood appropriately in terms of a uniform organizational culture. Doing participant observation of planned and formal induction programs and unstructured interviews of trainers, newcomers and other incumbents during breaks enables Daskalaki to focus on evoked meanings when imposed metaphors are contextualized in dialogues, bringing about diverging employee accounts (Daskalaki, 2012).

Describing newcomer entry and induction practices as potential ‘change spaces’, Daskalaki suggests we pay attention to “*discursive microprocesses*” (Ibid.:95) of convergent and divergent interpretations of organizing metaphors allowing for “*opposing narratives*” in “*countercultural entry processes*” proactively embedding “*polyvocality*” (Ibid.:96). “*Instead of trying to eliminate alternative interpretations and meanings, organizations could explore the opportunities for change brought about by dissonance and divergence experienced during organizational entry*” (Ibid.:95).

Although very briefly mentioning that power is an element of organizational discourse, Daskalaki’s description of viewing organizational entry and induction as a potential ‘change space’ that can be “capitalized” as a change management platform (Ibid.:94), ends up idealizing the notion of considering organizational entry

a potential basis for organizational change and innovation (as can be said of my own early work on the matter; Revsbaek, 2011). *“It redefines induction not as a top-down process and rhetorical tool toward new employee assimilation to dominant organizational cultures but as a space where divergent interpretations and meanings are co-implicated and new realities and social understandings can emerge”* (Daskalaki, 2012:94). She omits any substantial consideration with regard to the changed power dynamics between organizational newcomers and veterans necessarily implied in her suggestion to approach induction as a ‘change space’, rather than a practice of newcomer assimilation. Still, in her notion of the ‘rebellious trainer’, she admits to the subversive engagement also of veteran members in such *“countercultural entry processes”* (Ibid.:96) which is something not as clearly recognized in my own study presented in this thesis. My inquiry into dynamics between newcomer and veterans adds insight into the interdependency between newcomer and veteran coworker, the construction of their interdependent identities in their interpretation and enactment of desired organizational change and thus into power figurations between them (Chapter 7).

2.2.3 Induction as ‘generative dance’

In another study articulating the innovation potential of organizational entry and induction processes, Sprogøe and Elkjaer (2010) present a comparative case study on employee induction in a retail bank and a management consultancy firm on the basis of Sprogøe’s doctoral work (2008). From 30 interviews with managers and employees, newcomers and veterans, and some observations of induction practices and everyday work, they identify managers’ stories of wanting to learn from their newcomers, yet initiating induction programs not leaving *“much room for that”* (Sprogøe & Elkjaer, 2010:131).

The contribution of Sprogøe and Elkjaer is their description of *“the double potential of induction as a process of renewal as well as maintenance of status quo”* (Ibid.:132). They use the metaphors of ‘organizational rhythm’ and ‘generative dance’ to conceptualize this *“duality of induction”* (Ibid.:130). This is the duality I have described previously of the socialization research literature in terms of *socialization-as-assimilation versus innovation*.

Exemplifying changes brought about from newcomers’ *“questions and pondering upon existing routines”* (Ibid.:134), Sprogøe and Elkjaer mention altered smoking routines, new ways of counting money in the retail bank, and the use of new media to reach new customers. In the consultancy firm, reusing a powerpoint presentation worked out by a newcomer in his former employment, but now modified and transferred into the consultancy setting, is thus added to the codified knowledgebase of the consultancy firm (Ibid.). As they make explicit, Sprogøe and Elkjaer identify incremental changes as outcomes of new employee entry processes.

Sprogøe and Elkjaer also describe how the organization is adapting to newcomers in more “*subtle ways*”, as the “*pace*” and “*dynamism*” changes, due to newcomers entering the organization (Ibid.:134). A reported story of a veteran manager leaves the impression that the case study newcomers (described as ‘young people’) create dynamics in the company. The manager observes the newcomers’ rapid pace of work will require the veterans to make more of an effort. Sprogøe and Elkjaer report the bank management experiencing an increased “*ability to ‘take the outside temperature’*” from having the newcomers enter. Newcomers are witnessed informing veterans of new trends and of general impressions of people’s perceptions of banks and banking (Ibid.).

Sprogøe (2008) reports an incident in which a veteran coworker has to familiarize herself with the new company IT in order to introduce a newcomer to the software. Having to train the newcomer leads to the veteran coworker learning and changing her own practice in the direction intended by the company management, putting new company software to work in her everyday routines. Sprogøe understands this incident and other data from a learning theoretical perspective. My study suggests that we should be attentive to the way such incidents are related to overall changes in the organization and therefore also to fluctuating power figurations between people (see Chapter 6 and 7).

Sprogøe and Elkjaer use the metaphor of ‘rhythm’ from Cook and Yanow (1993) describing: “*The concept of rhythm is related to a music metaphor where the employees all play a different instrument. When a new ‘instrument’ starts to play, the other musicians automatically ‘tune in’ and the tune changes, even though it can be very difficult to trace exactly where and how the changes appears*” (Sprogøe & Elkjaer, 2010:134-5). The metaphor enables us to understand that not only newcomers, but also veterans ‘tune in’ to newcomers taking part in the organizational “orchestra” of activities. Sprogøe and Elkjaer arrive at the conclusion that “*if management want to use recruitment of newcomers as renewal of the enterprise, it is necessary to take the organizational rhythm into account*” (Ibid.:140), although it does not become quite clear what they mean. Returning to their dance metaphor, they further explain that it “*alludes to the to the necessity of following a rhythm with only little room for change*” (Ibid.).

On closing the analysis of my case study material, I conclude that *organizational entry processes are about everything going on in the organization at the time of the entries*. I end in understanding incidents of ‘newcomer innovation’ in terms of what I might label *incidents of ‘socialized innovation’ in a context of larger organizational transformation*, as I perceive newcomers to both socialize in the sense of ‘assimilate’ with respect to desired change *and* breach with habitual practice. This understanding resonates with Sprogøe’s and Elkjaer’s metaphor of necessarily following an ‘organizational rhythm’ that conditions incremental change.

Elaborating on their metaphorical perspective by referring to Dewey's Pragmatism another metaphor – that of 'meeting points' – in effect organizes Sprogøe's and Elkjaer's reference to the pragmatist view on learning and human experience and the relationship between the subject and 'the world'. Sprogøe and Elkjaer talk of *"numerous meeting points between subjects and worlds"* (Sprogøe & Elkjaer, 2010:139) and state that *"pragmatism alerts us to the importance of the meeting between subjects and worlds as the points where things happen"* (Ibid.). Linking this understanding with their understanding of organizational induction, they point out that *"when the meeting is between a newcomer and an organization – or an organized entity like a workplace – it is a meeting with already existing organizational structures and processes; fellow human beings who are also framed by (...) the organizational structures and processes; and artifacts like the physical layouts of buildings, machinery, etc."* (Ibid.:139). Using the metaphor of 'meeting points' in this sense implies that we might find ourselves, as individuals, somehow 'away from' or 'outside' these 'meeting points' between the subject and the world. When this happens, the theoretical potential to understand the interdependency between human beings in a pragmatist comprehension of self and identity is somewhat left behind. Even though Sprogøe and Elkjaer stress that we should not consider the individual and the collective as separate entities, but interrelated and understood in terms of *"mutual formations of persons and organizations"* (Ibid.:131), using a metaphor of 'meeting points' between the subject and the world ends up doing the opposite.

Drawing on the perspective of time in complexity science causality, G.H. Mead's social behaviorism and Norbert Elias' process sociology, in his theory of complex responsive processes between interdependent people Ralph Stacey (2010; 2011; 2012) understands organizations as essentially 'social objects' (Mead, 1934), that is, 'imaginative wholes' (Stacey, 2010). The emphasis on process and temporality in Stacey's theoretical perspective supports not reifying the notion of 'organization' into something that we as individuals are able to 'meet' (or 'not meet') in 'meeting points'.

Identifying an effect of newcomers' entry into the organization in terms of a change in organizational 'rhythm' and the 'pace' of the work, and thus challenging organizational veterans, Sprogøe and Elkjaer do not come closer to describing the dynamics of newcomers and veterans played out in the negotiated 'renewal' and 'maintenance of status quo', as they label it. My study offers further insight into the dynamics between newcomers and veterans, as they continuously negotiate the renewal and maintenance of the status quo during entry processes. Sprogøe and Elkjaer (2010) remind us that we must take the social and historical character of organizations and persons into account in attempting to understand induction. Prior acquaintance between some of the case study newcomers and their hiring managers in my inquiry puts a strong emphasis on *'relational histories'* in the constitution of habitus during organizational entry processes, and thus offers insight into how we

might understand this importance, emphasized by Sprogøe and Elkjaer, of taking the social and historical character of both organizations and persons into account when understanding organizational induction.

Finally, but not to an extended degree as I have done this elsewhere (for field reviews see also Revsbaek, 2011; Revsbaek, 2013a), I will briefly outline the notion of ‘newcomer innovation’ so explicitly suggested by Moreland and Levine and their colleagues, when researching socialization in small work groups. Their concept of ‘newcomer innovation’ served as a sensitizing device in my data collection, reversing the dominant discourse of socialization-as-assimilation (see Revsbaek, 2013a).

2.3.4 ‘Newcomer innovation’ in experimental work groups¹

‘Newcomer innovation’ is a notion suggested by Levine and colleagues, researching the entry of newcomers in autonomous, ad hoc work groups of university students in experimental research designs (Levine et. al., 2001; 2003; Hansen & Levine, 2009). They define the innovation of newcomers in broad terms as: *“any significant change in the structure, dynamics, or performance of a group”* (Levine et. al., 2001:91), and newcomer innovation is seen as brought about in *“implicit or explicit negotiation between newcomers, who suggest new ways of performing team tasks, and oldtimers, who accept these suggestions”* (Levine et. al., 2003:216). Levine and his colleagues approach the interactions between newcomers and oldtimers considering *“both parties acting as sources as well as targets of influence”* (Levine et. al., 2001:87). The experimental researchers introduce a distinction between *unintended* and *intended* newcomer innovation (Ibid.). Intended innovation is a newcomer ‘pushing’ the group to change in order for the group to fit the newcomer’s needs better (also known as ‘individualization’; see Jablin, 2001; Kramer, 2010). Hence, the innovation intentionality is assumed to be located with the newcomer.

To return briefly to Van Maanen and Schein’s influential paper on organizational socialization and the matter of stability and change related to organizational entries, they suggest *“the influence of the organization upon the individual peaks during passage, whereas the individual’s influence upon the organization peaks well after and well before any further movement”* of the individual between roles (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979:224-225). They unfold their argument concerning individual influence on the organization peaking at a point in time well after entry, by referring to the *“interpersonal trust”* necessary for a newcomer to *“exert meaningful influence”* on veterans (Ibid.:257). Van Maanen and Schein argue that interpersonal trust is attained over time at the expense of losing *“the sort of marginality and detachment necessary to suggest critical alterations in the social*

¹ Part of this section is a revision of a related section in the paper *Researching organizational entry from a perspective of newcomer innovation*, Revsbaek (2013a).

scheme of things” (Ibid.). The experimental studies by Levine and his colleagues (2001) aim to explain the conditions (other than interpersonal trust) under which a newcomer succeeds in exerting meaningful influence on oldtimers and thus bringing about newcomer innovation.

In this respect, Levine *et. al.* (2001) identify determining factors of ‘newcomer innovation’ incidents. Newcomer innovation seems to occur in situations:

- 1) When the newcomer is *motivated* to suggest new ideas to the group: “*Innovation attempts are more likely when newcomers want to change the group and believe their efforts will succeed*” (Ibid.:96). One such motivation could be if the newcomer’s needs are not being met, which could increase the likelihood of the newcomer attempting innovation. Another factor in newcomer motivation to attempt innovating is the perceived likelihood that such an innovation attempt would find acceptance among oldtimers. Newcomers read the group’s receptiveness to new ideas from responses previously given, also to veteran members’ ideas. Thus, in attempting innovation, the newcomer takes into account previous group responses and anticipates the likelihood of the group being receptive to suggestions (Ibid.).
- 2) When the newcomer is *capable* of developing useful ideas, that is, solutions perceived by veteran group members as potentially enhancing group performance, or as otherwise serving group interests. Newcomer capability to come up with ideas is more likely with prior experience in doing similar work (Ibid.).
- 3) When the newcomer is *able to convince* veteran group members to adopt the suggested new idea. Communication consistency is assumed to be a factor increasing the likelihood that the newcomer will convince oldtimers, although proactive behavior should be balanced and innovation suggestions properly timed. The perceived status of the newcomer among group oldtimers is also a factor (Ibid.).

Approaching organizational entry processes from a perspective of ‘newcomer innovation’ in my case study (Revsbaek, 2013a) it soon became evident that ‘change’, ‘disturbance’ and ‘rupture’ seemed characteristic of the organizational context *prior* to case study newcomer entries, rather than isolated effects of proactive newcomer behavior. Innovation, in my case study, seemed to be as much a *condition* as an *effect* of newcomer entry, due to large scale and locally enacted transformation of organizational practice in the case organization. Case study newcomers entered an already-changing-state-of-affairs and became *part* of those changes and *enactors* thereof from their first day at work. To view the case study newcomers’ attempts at innovation in terms of newcomer needs for individualizing work – as suggested when locating the innovation intentionality solely with the

newcomer, as do Levine et. al. - seemed insufficient for explaining the social acts of emerging change in my entry cases.

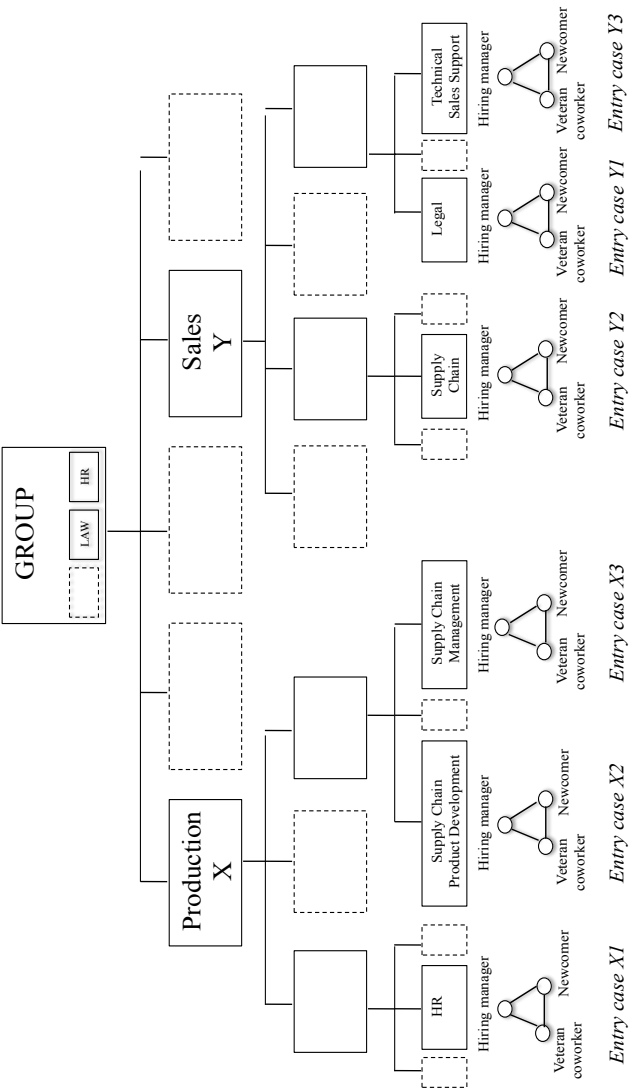
Thus, identifying organizational change as a contextual factor to newcomer entries, as much as a possible outcome of their entry and innovation, led me to take up a complexity theoretical perspective on organizational life, in which innovation is understood as a continuously evolving and responsive process, in which small variations in practice are iterated over time and possibly amplified. I took up the theoretical perspective of *complex responsive processes* formulated by Ralph Stacey (2010; 2011; 2012) and his colleagues at Hertfordshire University, based in turn on George Herbert Mead's social behaviorism, Norbert Elias' process sociology and complexity science causalities.

Chapter 3 presents the 'breakdowns-in-understanding' (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011) that constituted my inquiry from the experience of visiting the case organization and inquiring into the entry experiences of case study newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers. Chapter 4 presents the theoretical perspective of complex responsive processes (Stacey, 2010; 2011; 2012) used in the analysis of the case study materials.

By this introductory review, I hope to have made evident to readers that the question of innovation in relation to organizational entries has legitimacy beyond the answers that I offer in my work. In this respect, I am honored to have been part of keeping the question in play throughout the years of this research and in the communities of which I have been part. On closing this particular inquiry, I remain convinced that much is still to be learned concerning newcomer innovation during organizational entry. This refers not only to understanding organizational entry processes, but to understanding what 'organization' and 'processes of organizing' are in general. The question of 'newcomer innovation' targets our old and inherited debate on the relationship between the individual and the collective, and in doing so, reveals a relevant empirical field for informing our further theoretical development. Above all, I hope my work may inspire others to engage with these matters.

Now, a short outline of the case study design and data collection.

Figure 1: Organizational chart of case organization



2.4 Case study design and data collection

2.4.1 Case organization and case study entry cases

The case organization is a large Danish industrial company with more than 10.000 employees worldwide. Two business units operating in Denmark participated in the case study: a production unit (X) and a sales unit (Y). An organizational newcomer, a veteran coworker and a hiring manager in three departments in each of the two business units make up a total of six entry cases. The newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers are employed in company support functions, such as legal and HR, and in departments of supply chain management, supply chain product development and technical sales support (see Figure 1).

Appendix 2 briefly presents facts about the six entry cases: The type of department, job functions of the newcomer, veteran coworker and hiring manager, professional backgrounds and organizational seniority for each case study participant, and entry case specifics for each of the six entry cases. Whenever a case study participant is quoted in the thesis, this is done with a clear demarcation as to what entry case the particular newcomer, veteran coworker and hiring manager belongs. ‘Newcomer (X1)’ thus means the newcomer in entry case 1 of business unit X, namely ‘entry case X1’. These demarcations likewise mark each entry case in appendix 1. The study concerns the organizational entry of specialized white-collar employees.

2.4.2 Data collection

The case study period extended from September 2010 to April 2011. During this period, I conducted participant observation of company induction seminars, interviewed newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers, read company documents related to company induction practices, and shared an early analysis with case study participants and management representatives. The case study period and process of data collection are presented in Figure 2.

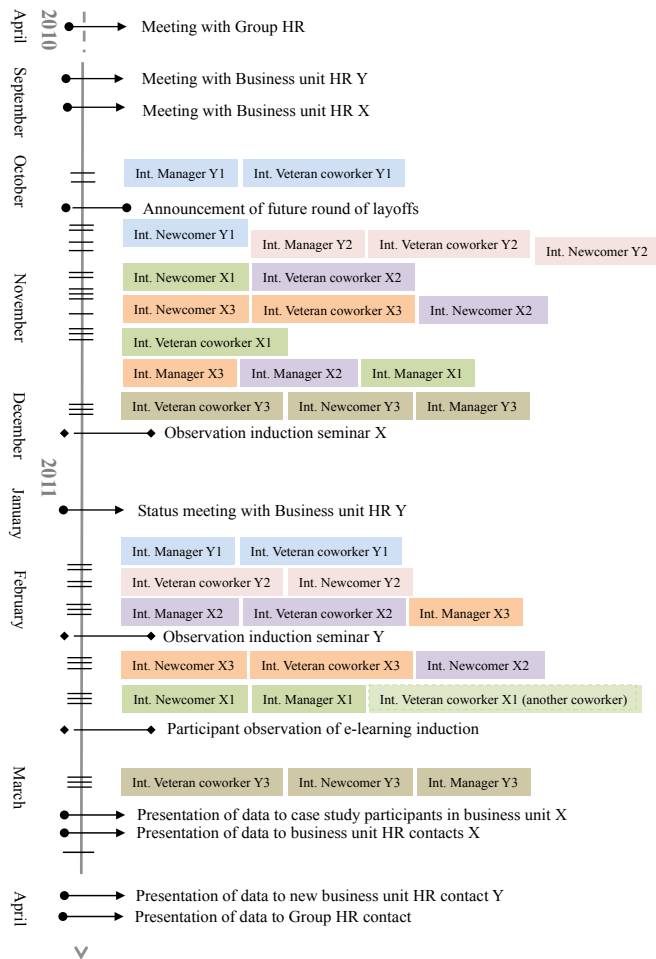
All interviews were audio recorded, as was the report made to case study participants in one of the participating business units. All interviews were later transcribed. The method of analysis is described in Chapter 5 and in the paper *Analyzing in the Present* (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014).

All newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers were interviewed twice in a longitudinal multi-perspective interview design². The first interview took place one month after the newcomer’s entry and the second interview three months later. Thus, 19 participants were interviewed across the six entry cases and the case study includes 34 interviews. Three participants left the company between the first and second round of interviews: a newcomer (Y1), a veteran coworker (X1) and a hiring

² For introductory letter to interviewees, see Appendix 1.

manager (Y2) – each from different entry cases (of the six). The resigning veteran coworker was replaced by another veteran coworker in the second round of interviews.

Figure 2. Case study period and activities



In the semi-structured qualitative interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), participants were interviewed individually about their experience of the shared work and interactions during the period of entry. Each was asked initially about their job function, current work assignments, professional background and seniority in the company. Newcomers were additionally interviewed about their experience participating in the formal induction program, managers about the company induction practice and its practical relevance for the everyday work of the employing department, and veteran coworkers on how they experienced being mentors to their new colleagues.

2.4.3 Induction practices in the case company

Case study newcomers describe being welcomed by the company CEO in an introductory letter mailed to their home address prior to their first day at work. Upon arriving in the office on their first day at work, newcomers are welcomed by colleagues for coffee and snacks. Practical work essentials such as computer, desk, and email are already in place. *“It makes you feel welcome, and makes you feel they are expecting you”*, one newcomer (X1) says.

Besides such initial welcoming initiatives, the company induction program consists of three formalized aspects: Induction seminars, e-learning and mentor relationships. During the first few weeks of employment, newcomers attend two kinds of induction seminar. One is a global seminar which newcomers from different business units attend. These global induction seminars are conducted by Group HR trainers and feature representatives of Group management. Additionally, decentralized Business Unit induction seminars are conducted by Business Unit HR. These seminars feature business unit directors presenting the history of the unit and explaining what part of the company value chain the business unit contribute to and introducing company core values, alongside habitual ways of working in the specific business unit.

Recently developed e-learning programs take the newcomer through prototypical steps of the production line and customer services, and in toolbox seminars, HR partners introduce the newcomers to the basic IT structure of the company.

The trial period concludes with a business unit onboarding seminar which, besides offering newcomers the possibility to exchange their (newcomer) experiences, presents the annual people review process and talent development programs of the company.

Closer to the day-to-day work, each newcomer is assigned a coworker as mentor. There are large variations in the way this role is practiced across the six entry cases. Some work closely with their mentor, some never meet as mentor and mentee, and

in yet other departments, mentorship is not practiced during entry. The use of mentorship is more outspoken in one business unit than in the other.

One way that I, as a researcher, came to experience the continuing change initiatives in the organization while attending employee induction seminars and doing interviews, was by witnessing how the practices of employee induction were being changed in a top-down fashion during the period of the case study inquiry. A new global and more gameplay-oriented induction program was launched during the case study period. It was developed by HR specialists in Group HR and is now being implemented and practiced by Business Unit HR trainers. The business unit trainers were to be trained as trainers of this new induction program by Group HR instructors. In one business unit (Y), it was possible for me to participate in an early run of this new employee orientation program. In the other (business unit X), it was still the usual unit specialized way of conducting employee induction that I attended as a participant observer.

2.4.4 *The role of the entry cases in the process of analysis*

“In abduction, an (often surprising) single case is interpreted from a hypothetical overarching pattern, which, if it were true, explains the case in question” (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2010:4).

Although all entry cases of the case study inform the analysis presented in this thesis, selected entry cases are made focal to analysis. Entry case X1 and X3 diverge from project pre-assumptions, in that the newcomer and hiring manager knew each other prior to the newcomer's entry. As we shall see in Chapter 3, entry cases X1 and X3 question the theoretical assumptions of organizational coherence and organizational stability in employing work communities, that is inherent and dominant in much research literature on organizational socialization. Both entry case X1 and X3 are about a recently hired manager now hiring a newcomer employee of whom the manager has prior knowledge from a shared former workplace. Both cases produce a 'marginalized voice' of the veteran coworker. Entry case X1 was made focal to the paper *The Ecology of Entry* (Revsbaek, 2013b) illustrating reversed established-outsider dynamics between newcomer and veteran coworker. Entry case X3 is made focal to analysis in this thesis as it departs from the assumptions of coherence and stability of the employing work community and *still* presents a case of 'newcomer innovation'. The newcomer and veteran coworker of entry case X3 share work and task responsibility during the period of entry, which is not the case in entry case X1.

Although these two entry cases are focal to analysis, all entry cases inform this analysis. This is particularly evident in the case study analyses in Chapter 6, as the organizational habitus and a global theme of change in the case organization is identified across case study participants' stories of many entry cases. This is equally evident in Chapter 8, as the notion of 'adjusting to the emergent' is further

elaborated, drawing explicitly on the experiences from other entry cases in the study.

Because I conduct breakdown-driven research (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011), and have worked my way into an autobiographic stance toward analyzing conventional interview material (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014), in combination with field notes and my experience from participant observation, the following account of the surprising experiences constituting my case study inquiry are highly evocative in their presentation and narrative voice. This said, the following chapter takes you right into the case study interviews that challenged and made me aware of the theoretical pre-assumptions inherent in research on organizational entry and newcomer innovation, on the basis of which I approached the field.

PART 2 : APPARATUS OF OBSERVATION

3. Constituting an inquiry

“The contribution of social science does not lie in validated knowledge, but rather in the suggestion of relationships and connections that had not previously been suspected, relationships that change action and perspectives” (Weick 1989:524, quoted in Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011:59)

3.1 Breakdown-in-understanding I:

Questioning organizational unity and coherence

3.1.1 *Case narrative: Prior acquaintance between newcomer and hiring manager*

In his interview conversation with me, an entry case newcomer (X3) reflects on what it is like to be new in the organization:

Newcomer (X3) “I was about to say that part of the challenge of coming here to this new organization is not knowing anybody, but then, in fact, I actually do. A lot of former employees from my earlier organization now work in this organization. My boss, for example, is a former colleague of mine from the old organization.”

I: “Oh, is he?”

I am interviewing him as part of the first round of interviews within the multi-perspective interview design in which I am interviewing six entry case newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers with respect to their shared collaboration during the period of entry. My project contact at the company human resources (HR) department, who assigned newcomers and their departments to the case study interviews, had apparently not considered it relevant to the social categories of organizational ‘newcomer’ and ‘veteran’ (nor to the phenomenon of entry processes), that the hiring manager and hired newcomer shared a prior working relationship from a former workplace. Learning about their prior acquaintance in the interview, I was surprised to realize that I myself had assumed organizational entry

processes to be encounters between *unfamiliar* newcomers with *internally familiar* veteran employees and managers. It seemed that I shared this assumption with much of the research on organizational socialization. Yet, this assumption may well not conform with the reality of rapidly growing organizations (definitely so in this case study). The assumption that entry is about unfamiliar newcomers encountering internally familiar veterans may be particularly 'out of tune' with reality, given that increasingly more recruitment in today's organizations occurs in the context of networking.

The newcomer continues in our interview with a remark to me as researcher:

Newcomer (X3): "It'll be interesting if you can tell it from the accounts you get in the interview material"

- he says, and smiles, referring to the acquaintance between himself and the hiring manager. continues:

Newcomer (X3): "The colleague sitting at the desk opposite me in the office is also from the old organization."

I: "Interesting, an organization within the organization ..."

Newcomer (X3): "When you know about 250 people from various parts of your earlier organization, then of course, although they leave that organization and come to this one, you still know them. I think I can count at least seven or eight people here from the old organization and whom I know. So I am not completely new - or how should I put it - of course I am new. But when I need to figure out how things work around here, I have more people to go to and we exchange opinions on why this or that is different from where we were before."

In another interview with a veteran coworker from a different entry case (X1), I confirm as interviewer: "*Your new colleague is Peter, right?*" I did this at the beginning of each interview to ensure that I had on tape the name of the interviewee and the newcomer in question, thus enabling me to differentiate between each of the entry cases, when working from the recorded material. "*Yes, one of them*" she replies and laughs briefly, "*but it's Peter we are talking about today*" she says, and emphasizes. "*They are all new, you know*". Her lighthearted voice in the last remark leads me to respond in a cursory manner, "*Oh yeah, that's right, they are*". I am already tuning my attention to the prepared interview questions. As her remark sinks in, it reminds me of the prior acquaintance between her newcomer colleague and their manager (X1). I had learned of this in an earlier interview with newcomer a few days back. Apparently, this entry case manager arrived in the case organization

only seven months ago, whereas the entry case newcomer arrived one month ago. The newcomer had contacted the hiring manager, who was his former colleague from their (shared) former workplace. He needed a reference from her in relation to his application for a job in another company and the idea was briefly mentioned that if she herself ever needed new employees, he would be interested. A month later, the opportunity arose and he applied for the vacancy along with other candidates and was offered duly employment in the department.

Because I am reminded of this prior acquaintance between the hiring manager and the newcomer, and also the fairly recent hiring of manager, I realized I didn't quite know what the veteran coworker had meant with her reply "*they are all new, you know*". I rephrase and ask her:

I: "Are they *all* new?"

Veteran coworker (X1):

"Yes, our manager, she has been here the longest, for seven months. I have been here ten years. So except for our part time assistant, all of them are new."

I: "Okay..."

Besides the case study newcomer, another coworker who had been recruited four months earlier was also from the common former workplace of hiring manager and case study newcomer. I was becoming ever more aware that these relational histories had in no way been part of what I expected to encounter in conventionally researching organizational entry processes. Either this was exceptional, or it was a different reality to the practice of recruitment and employment patterns usually assumed in the literature on organizational entry. The veteran coworker and I, being in the interview, had not yet explored what these unexpected circumstances meant for the entry in question. However, as if she were putting our conversation back on track, she concluded: "*But Peter is the newest, so he is the one we are focusing on*". I was trying to make enough sense of what I was being told to continue investigating her experience of the entry process. Thinking aloud, not knowing what question to ask her, and reluctant to change the course of the conversation, 'back on track', away from these surprising and apparently important issues, my response came slowly: "*Yes, yes.... yes. ...But it is also an interesting context that everyone around him is also new. You say you have been here for ten years?*". Her reply came quickly: "*Yes, seven years in another business unit and three years in this one. So I am old school, real old school compared to the others!*"

"*An organization within the organization*" is the metaphor taking shape in my perception during the interview conversation, as well as an image of this

“organization within the organization” as structured around relational histories. ”*I am new, but I am not completely new*” he says. He has “*people to go to and we exchange opinions on why this or that is different from where we were before*”. They share a culture, habitus, or as Willert and Ströbech (2014), drawing on Mead, put it in relation to organizational mergers: they share a ‘generalized other’. Accordingly, the entry case newcomer does not feel ‘completely new’.

Referring to Weick’s statement about the contribution of social science, the work-related relational histories beyond the current employment in the case study entry cases are relationships “*not previously suspected*” (Weick, 1989:524, quoted in Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011:59), but significant to the entry-period dynamics between newcomers and veterans.

3.1.2 From nebulous organization to relational histories

All six newcomers participating in the case study interviews entered the organization from ‘outside’, from prior employment in other companies. They all have prior work experience relevant to their current employment. The case study participants are thus “sophisticated newcomers”, to use Daskalaki’s phrasing (Daskalaki, 2012). They are work-to-work newcomers, not professional novices.

In one of the case organization business units, all three hiring managers participating with their newcomers in the case study are themselves fairly new to the organization. The seniority of these hiring managers is seven (X1), five (X3) and four (X2) months, respectively. The fact of newly entered managers taking new employees onboard was not a criterion I had thought of controlling for in advance in the research design. Furthermore, although constituting a surprising element of my inquiry, the phenomenon of being a newcomer hired by a fairly new manager was a mundane observation in this particular business unit, as it was a rapidly growing organization with a fairly high flow of employees and managers (the average seniority was a little over two years).

In two of the three entry cases with fairly new hiring managers, the manager and the newcomer had worked together as colleagues in a shared former workplace – these two cases are focal to the analysis of this case study. One (case X1) is reported in the paper *The Ecology of Entry* (Revsbaek, 2013b), the other (case X3) is presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

As Kramer (2010) reminds us, “*socialization and personalization* [which may also be described as ‘innovation’, as demonstrated in Chapter 2] *do not involve interactions between some nebulous organization and individuals. Instead, they occur through communication between organizational members*” (Kramer 2010:4). Although reminding us of this, Kramer continues to write about the assimilation of the ‘individual’ and the accommodation of the ‘group’ in a vocabulary that does not reflect this insight. Inherent in the frequently articulated dichotomy of either

(newcomer) assimilation or (organizational) accommodation in the research literature, as presented earlier, is a theoretical pre-assumption of ‘the individual’ and ‘the collective’ as separate and autonomous entities.

Faced with the interview stories of ‘an organization within the organization’ and the prior acquaintance between case study newcomers and hiring managers, I was initially puzzled by the newcomer ‘not being completely new’ (newcomer X3) and the veteran coworker ‘feeling old school’ and ‘being alone’ (veteran coworker X1). Additionally, I was starting to realize my own pre-understanding had progressed no further than that expressed by Kramer when stating that organizational entry is not a matter of newcomers encountering some nebulous organization, yet continuing to talk about the newcomer and ‘the group’ when explaining entry processes (see for example Revsbaek, 2011).

G. H. Mead reminds us in his *Philosophy of the Present* (Mead, 1932) that “*the organization of any individual thing carries with it the relation of this thing to processes that occurred before this organization set in*” (Ibid.:49). Approaching organizational entry processes from a perspective of ‘newcomer innovation, I was drawing on Moreland’s and Levine’s notion of ‘newcomer innovation’ as described in Chapter 2 (Moreland & Levine, 1985; Levine et. al., 2001; 2003; see also Revsbaek, 2013a). In their experimental designs, Levine and his colleagues had a singular newcomer entering into already established work groups, enabling a newcomer *unfamiliar* to all established members to enter at a late point in their work. Thus, the established members of the group were not previously familiar with the entering newcomer in the sense of having formerly worked together – that is, except from the fact that the participants in the experimental studies (‘outside’ the experiment) were students in a university setting and might therefore know each other from their everyday student life. But we do not know the particularities of this circumstance, as Levine and his colleagues do not consider the specific interaction history between the involved actors as a factor of analysis in their study. The present case study, though, seems to suggest “*relationships and connections that had not previously been suspected, relationships that change action and perspectives*” (Weick 1989:524, quoted in Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011:59). The point made in the current inquiry on *organizational* entries is: Relational histories between hiring manager and newcomer, and the lack of such a history of relating between hiring manager and veteran coworker, play a part in the dynamics between newcomer employee, veteran coworker and hiring manager.

3.1.3 Interview excerpt: Shared culture beyond organizational borders

The veteran coworker (X1) feeling “*old school, real old school*”, compared to the three newcomers in her department of five, describes the entry of her new manager as having the most (destabilizing) impact on her job.

Veteran coworker (X1):

“... You know, then I come along and try to redefine something they have done for a hundred years. It’s not gonna work out.”

I: “It’s interesting that you say that *you* are the one who *comes along* and wants to redefine something *they* have done for years.
- They are the ones coming here [into the organization where a veteran coworker is already a member]?”

Veteran coworker (X1):

“Yes, but it’s not really like that. We are our own little group, and what I am trying to say is that it is really a sense of me being alone, not them.”

(...)

Veteran coworker (X1):

“... if three people [in a department of five] have the same picture of what the world looks like, then it is really, really difficult if you don’t agree. And the three people come from another world where they think another way, but agree on how to think. I think it is unfortunate to have chosen three people from the same former company to be in the same department.”

I: “How so?”

Veteran coworker (X1):

“When you are having a conversation, some will see the picture the same way as each other, because they were ‘brought up’ together. It would be the same if I met some of the people from the same part of the organization that I came from before the merger. You would still notice today that we have been brought up within the same culture; we have shared the same ‘baby bottle’. For example, if we sit in a meeting, I can easily tell who comes from one or the other of the two pre-merger organizations. And it is the same thing that I see here. In this respect we are all alike. Had it been three people from the old pre-merger organization, you would have witnessed the same kind of thing.”

I: “So the culture you bring with you affects your approach now?”

Veteran coworker (X1):

“Fore sure it does. And it would do so no matter where you come from. But when it is so many people out of the same group, then it has all the more effect.”

A specific comment made by the veteran coworker stayed in my mind: “...*then I come along and try to redefine something they have done for a hundred years. It’s not gonna work out.*” (veteran coworker X1). She uses the narrative that I would otherwise consider as reflecting a marginalized newcomer’s voice: “*then I come along and try to redefine something they have done for a hundred years*” - as if spoken by a true newcomer! Only, it is the voice of a marginalized *veteran* coworker.

She lets me know that she is currently applying for a job in another organization. She was to have a job interview that afternoon and she left the organization one month later.

I was left struck by the naturalness with which she commented that she understood the newcomer ‘fraction’, so to speak, explaining she would act similarly, if she met up with colleagues with whom she shared a culture from before the company merger five years back. As with the newcomers, the veteran coworker was also part of a group, but not the one currently gaining dominance in their department and defining how to approach the work.

3.1.4 Established and Outsiders

In their study of a community settlement in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, Norbert Elias and his student John Scotson identified a power figuration between a group of more recent settlers in the suburban community and a relatively old settlement consisting of families who had known each other through two or three generations. The process sociology of Norbert Elias is one of the theoretical grounds from which the *complex responsive processes* perspective (Stacey, 2010; 2011; 2012) is developed, and on which I base my case study analysis (see further in Chapter 4).

Elias and Scotson (1994) describe the “‘oldness’ of association”, that is, the shared history and thus a shared “*fund of common memories*” (Ibid.:xlvi) between members of a group, as the primary factor in emerging group cohesion. “*Once more one is reminded of the need for reconstituting the temporal character of groups and their relationships as processes in the sequence of time if one wants to understand the boundaries that people set up by distinguishing between a group of which they say ‘we’ and another to which they refer as ‘they’*” (Ibid.:xlviii). In their analysis of an established vs. outsider figuration between the two groups of residents in the suburban community, Elias and Scotson demonstrate the ‘oldness’ of associations between the established residents of the community, and the equal lack of shared history between newcomers, as the principal difference between the two groups

explaining the emerged established-outsider figuration between them. The two groups are otherwise alike in terms of nationality, race and social class. *"The principal difference between the two groups was precisely this: that one was a group of old residents established in the neighbourhood for two or three generations and the other was a group of newcomers. The sociological significance of this fact was a marked difference in the cohesion of the two groups. One was closely integrated and the other was not."* (Ibid:xxii). Elias and Scotson show the relatively stronger group cohesion of one group in relation to the other to be characteristic of an established-outsider figuration between two interdependent groups. The group with shared history becomes the established group and the one with no shared history – neither with established community members nor between each other – becomes the outsider group. *"Differentials in the degree of internal cohesion and communal control, can play a decisive part in the power ratio of one group in relation to that of another"* (Ibid.:xviii). Elias and Scotson's study on the established and the outsiders has some explanatory value in relation to the current case study and the observed 'relational histories' between entering managers and employee newcomers having been colleagues in a former workplace, now working with unfamiliar organizational veteran coworkers, and amongst them, one who explicitly describes herself as an outsider: 'It is really a sense of me being alone, not them'.

The veteran coworker thus adapts the voice of an outsider in saying *"then I come along and try to redefine something they have done for a hundred years"*, *"I am old school, real old school compared to the others"*, *"it is really a sense of me being alone; not them"* (veteran coworker, X1). Her account of her experience fuels the necessary deconstruction of any simple conception of the social categories of 'organizational veteran' and 'organizational newcomer', assuming those with high organizational seniority as necessarily 'established' and those with low seniority as current 'outsiders'. This particular entry case with the veteran coworker feeling 'old school, real old school' is presented in the (Danish) journal paper *The Local Ecology of Entry* (in Danish *Modtagelsessamspillet lokale økologi*, Revsbæk, 2013b). What is additionally suggested in this thesis by bringing in Elias and Scotson's study (Elias & Scotson, 1994) is that established-outsider figurations, related as they are to the specific relational histories of specific people, is just as likely to constitute established groups of entering newcomers with a longstanding shared professional history. And repeated restructuring initiatives in the employing company and the recent relocation of departmental veterans, may contribute to lower group coherence between the veteran employees of an employing department, making entry processes more about veteran coworkers 'joining' the habitus largely introduced by a coherent newcomer fraction. As Mead reminded us earlier *"the organization of any individual thing carries with it the relation of this thing to processes that occurred before this organization set in"* (Mead, 1932:49). Thus, processes of grouping and shared habitus go beyond organizational borders, and the

relational histories of and between the specific actors influence the socialization process of organizational newcomers and its impact on veterans.

The outsider veteran coworker (X1) makes me attentive to the coherence of shared culture between her and her pre-merger colleagues, as well as between her new managers and her newly employed colleagues who share a culture from their former workplace. The impression of ‘organizations within the organization’ from these interview stories of both her and the newcomer (X3) describing himself as ‘new, but not completely new’ initiates a paradigmatic change in my analysis from considering an ‘individual facing a nebulous collective’ to ‘individuals in processes of relating’ that can be understood in terms of ‘grouping’ based on people’s relational histories (prior acquaintances), as well as the discursive fluctuations in the organization at the time of their entry.

The analysis in subsequent chapters illustrates these processes of relating and the emergence of groupings of shared culture that transcends what we traditionally consider as organizational borders marked by employment contracts and formal departmental membership.

Having thus described case study participants’ stories to challenge some of my original project assumptions, I now explain my research as a breakdown-driven inquiry (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011).

3.2 Abductive reasoning and breakdown-driven research

“The world reveals itself to have shattered our unreflected expectations; our habitual actions meet with resistance from the world and rebound back on us. This is the phase of real doubt. And the only way out of this phase is a reconstruction of the interrupted context. Our perception must come to terms with new or different aspects of reality; action (...) must restructure itself” (Joas, 1996:128-9)

Arguing the role of case studies in the development of new theory, Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) make a case for ‘mystery as method’, drawing on the logic of ‘abductive reasoning’ from pragmatist Charles Sanders Pierce (1978). Acknowledging the postmodern insight that empirical materials are in some sense (socially) constructed and that (identified) data is inherently theory-laden (Hanson, 1958), Alvesson and Kärreman suggest an approach to empirical research in which empirical material is considered a “critical dialogue partner” in challenging dominant theories in a field (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). *“The empirical material should be mobilized as a critical dialogue partner and not as a judge or a mirror, which [then] problematizes a significant form of understanding and thereby encourages problematization and theoretical insights”* (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011:62).

Alvesson and Kärreman acknowledge the critique of neo-positivistic and dataistic approaches to inductive empirical work placing too high and too immodest an emphasis on empirical data as building blocks for theory (such as ‘grounded theory’ traditions). As an alternative, they argue that ‘surprises’ and ‘breakdowns-in-understanding’ triggered by the encounter with empirical material, form a starting point of qualitative inquiry (Ibid.). “*Qualitative inquiry, and the construction of an understanding, primarily occurs in situations of breakdown*” (Brinkmann, 2012:44).

Using ‘mystery’ as driving metaphor in social science, Alvesson’s and Kärreman’s approach to qualitative inquiries can be summed up as follows: “*The mystery method is based on less faith in the robustness of data and a stronger emphasis on being imaginative and rethinking established frameworks in order to come up with new ideas and theories ... Surprising observations, new ideas and insights then mean more than empirical precision alone ... A reasonable (rather than optimal) high degree of rigor and trustworthiness on the descriptive side is still called for*” (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011:63).

In our paper *Analyzing in the Present* (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014), we argue that the substance of our inquiries is not ‘data’ or ‘empirical material’, as in interview transcripts and field notes. Even transcribing is known to be an interpretive act (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999; Bird, 2005). Instead, the substance of inquiry is our *lived experience* from conducting the interviews, being in the field as participant observers and from otherwise taking part in organizational life our selves beyond the immediate case study occasions. Additionally, we recall those past experiences in present situations doing analysis, writing or - as we explain in the paper - listening to recorded interview conversations. Thus, the methodological paper *Analyzing in the Present* is a contribution to the debate that is critically evaluating, thus ‘troubling’ the concept of ‘data’ (St. Pierre, 1997; 2011) and the use of data-reliant methods of analysis (Tanggaard, 2013).

As Brinkmann points out, “*qualitative researchers, who talk about ‘data’, tend to want to ‘code’ them*” (Brinkmann 2014:720). ‘Coding’ is a way of making a pattern emerge in the transcribed material, and we can use computers to support identifying this pattern of codes. In *Analyzing in the Present*, we describe the researcher’s *patterning associations* across case study experiences, in situations of small-scale ‘breakdowns-in-understanding’, while listening to recorded interview conversations, as a resource in constructing rich empirical case narratives. The elicited associations across the full case study experiences create a *situational patterning of associated case study incidents* which can then be sought out in the transcribed material and put together in a case narrative on the combined associated incidents. Such narratives include the eliciting moment, listening to either a case study participant conveying his or her story in an interview, or listening to the recorded interview situation and having the researcher experiencing her bewilderment at the time of the interview or when listening to the recording.

As opposed to inductive and deductive reasoning, both concerned with the relationship between *theory* and *data*, Brinkmann describes abduction as “a form of reasoning that is concerned with the relationship between a situation and inquiry” (Brinkmann, 2014:722). “Abduction is thus a form of reasoning used in situations of uncertainty” (Ibid.). “Inquiry is (...) the process of trying to understand the situation by sense-making” (Ibid.:722). Considering the substance of our inquiries to be lived experiences (conducting the case study and eventually also otherwise) places an emphasis on *us*, the researchers, not computers as the generator of patterned meaning. It also makes the limit of our knowledge - that is, our continuous breakdowns-in-understanding when we return to experience and re-experience our recorded research material - the driving generator of such meaning. “Misunderstanding triggers a search for understanding thereby provoking continued imaginative elaboration and communication. It is in such continued struggles for meaning, and the imaginative elaboration going with it, that the novel emerges” (Stacey, 2010:185).

Developing our argument for taking this autobiographic approach toward analyzing conventional interview material, we draw in our paper on G. H. Mead’s *Philosophy of the Present* (1932) (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014). To state, as Mead does, that with every emergent event, the past that stretches behind it becomes another (Mead, 1932), resonates with the experience of *patterning associations across prior incidents* in situations of uncertainty in which researcher’s ‘unreflected expectations’ are questioned (Joas, 1996), and therefore reflexivity triggered. To Mead, ontological reality is seated in the present (Mead, 1932), and past and future are “epistemological resources” for acting in that present (Simpson, 2014). “If there is emergence, the reflection of this into the past at once takes place. There is a new past, for from every new rise the landscape that stretches behind us becomes a different landscape” (Mead, 1932:42). Considering our situations of doing analysis as the emergent event that casts off associations across our material and past case study experience, is a way of identifying patterns in our ‘material’ and selecting what could relevantly be included in our written case narrative.

I took guidance from Alvesson and Kärremann (2011) to make the ‘surprises’ in the case study the focus of my analytical and interpretive attention. “In abduction, an (often surprising) single case is interpreted from a hypothetic overarching pattern, which, if it were true, explains the case in question” (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2010:4). Boiling their advice down to two guiding principles 1) focusing on the surprising events and elements of my empirical material, and 2) selecting those incidents that departed the most from current thinking in the field. The situations of analysis presented in the case narratives of this motivating section of my inquiry, are interview situations of ‘breakdowns-in-understanding’ questioning the assumed cultural *unity* and *coherence* of employing organizations (see the narrative above) and the assumed organizational *stability* present in much research on organizational socialization (see narrative below). “Thus empirical material, when properly

constructed, helps form a strong impetus towards rethinking conventional wisdom” (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011:62).

“In abduction the scientist frees himself from the yoke of former perceptions and received interpretations and creates a free relationship to both. This free relationship is precisely one of acquired freedom, that is, what characterizes abduction is not regression to a pre-reflective relationship to the world as such, but rather the use of self-control and experience for the purpose of liberation to enable the free play of ideas and perceptions to take place. It is therefore not free association as such, which is merely being dressed up as ‘creativity’, but an active form of release in which sight is never lost of the problem at hand that is calling for explanation” (Joas, 1996:135).

I will now elaborate ‘the problem at hand’ in which I found myself immersed, having encountered the reality of the case organization.

3.3 Breakdown-in-understanding II: Questioning stability

As described in Chapter 2, articulating innovation in relation to newcomer entries is still a minority perspective in the research on organizational socialization and employee induction. Furthermore, when the innovation potential of newcomer entries is articulated in the organizational socialization research literature, it is often done so in terms of newcomers disrupting a stable organizational operation, implying *a stability of that which newcomers enter*.

“Firms can use the entry of newcomers to ‘unfreeze’ the workgroup, that is, as an opportunity to rethink work processes, patterns of social interaction, and even the group’s core values and beliefs” (Feldman, 2012:215).

Feldman’s use in this quotation of Lewinian vocabulary to describe the innovation in having newcomers enter the organization (e.i. *unfreeze*, Lewin, 1947) implies that the “workgroup”, “work processes”, “patterns of social interaction” and “core values” are ‘frozen’, that is, stable units of analysis, which entries of organizational newcomers might affect. During the period of rapid increase in research on organizational socialization since Van Maanen and Schein’s oft quoted paper from 1979, there has been a theoretical change in how the concept of culture is understood and taken up in ethnographic practice and writing (Van Maanen, 2011). *“Holistic perspectives of culture with their toe-bone-connected-to-the-foot-bone logic have given way to representations of culture in flux, whose natives may have as much difficulty knowing it and living in it as the fieldworker”* (Ibid.:127). Van Maanen writes on the changed notion of culture in an Epilog to the 2011 edition of his *Tales from the Field*-classic (referred to as ‘*Tales*’, originally published in 1986):

“The view of culture I now take – a shift since Tales appeared – is a distributive and de-territorialized one that would contest the idea of culture as necessarily a bounded, coherent entity of collective sharing. (...) Much more important these days than in times past, culture should be understood as residing largely within a sphere of social relationships and only indirectly tied to place” (Ibid.:155, Epilog). The way he and Schein originally wrote about newcomers responding in an either ‘innovative’ or ‘custodial’ way to their new work role, depending on the organizational socialization strategies being either ‘individualized’ or ‘institutionalized’ (Jones, 1986), is based on just such an assumption of *“bounded, coherent entity of collective sharing”* (Van Maanen, 2011:155). In his 2011 epilog, Van Maanen explains how ethnographers *“must now work in many social contexts where an assumed (rightly or wrongly) coherence has been shattered and replaced by a polyphonic pluralism of meaning and interpretation”* (Ibid.:162). The same - I could add - applies for organizational newcomers, their veteran coworkers and hiring managers. Entry period encounters between newcomers and veterans must therefore be understood within the context of such ‘shattered coherence’ and ‘polyphonic pluralism’. This is slightly different from Daskalaki’s suggestion to embrace the “polyvocality” of organizational entry and induction (Daskalaki, 2012:96), because it highlights (organizational) culture as a ‘polyphonic pluralism’ aside of newcomer entries.

This ethnographic insight acknowledged by Van Maanen in his 2011 Epilog - that (organizational) culture is not a unified construct or a fixed entity - is not yet an integrated theoretical premise in research on organizational socialization and employee induction. The prevailing vocabulary of newcomer assimilation versus organizational accommodation is little influenced by this.

“The current concept of adjustment itself, with its implied postulate of an unchanging, stable, balanced, integrated and cohesive social order to which one can adjust, seems a little out of place in twentieth-century societies which are rapidly changing and are anything but stable” (Elias & Scotson, 1994:160).

3.3.1 Newcomers entering a changing organization

Besides the fact of theoretical change in how we perceive the notion of (organizational) culture as ‘distributed’ and ‘in flux’ (e.i. Van Maanen, 2011), in a period where research in organizational socialization has increased extensively without taking this up, my research interest in understanding organizational entries from a process theory perspective started with an empirical observation of case study newcomers entering an organizational setting described (by case study participants) and experienced (by them and me) to be rapidly changing.

Visiting the case organization, I learned that it had been growing rapidly for five years following a merger of two companies. Initiatives to restructure are ‘frequent’

in the organization, I am told. This entails changing job descriptions, people moving between departments and aligning organizational structures across business units. Moreover, a generally large flow of employees into and out of the organization, and the newly hired managers taking onboard new employees in three of the six departments participating in the case study, added to the impression of a substantially changing organization. An announced future round of layoffs six days into the case study and the prospect of yet another restructuring of departments and job functions contributed to the environment of change in which newcomers and veterans were doing their work, entering and making sense of their work-related experiences.

The practical circumstance of these changes in the organization at the time of the case study was the empirical basis from which I attempted to understand the organizational entry process and newcomer innovation. The fact of newcomers entering an already changing organization and being described by their veteran coworkers and hiring managers as both fitting in and contributing to desired change challenged existing ways of framing innovation related to newcomer entries. As described in Chapter 2, I initially approached the case study interviews and observations sensitized by the notion of ‘newcomer innovation’, and I *did* encounter stories of newcomers contributing and innovating (see also Revsbæk, 2011), but those stories were of (small) incidents in a much larger flow of organizational transformation. I had to understand the storied newcomer contributions and innovations in terms of their contextualization within the broader process of change. For that purpose, I found the complexity theory perspective of *complex responsive processes* (Stacey, 2010; 2011; 2012) helpful, and present it in Chapter 4.

3.4 Resonating questions of research

The breakdowns-in-understanding that I encountered from experiencing the organizational reality of the case organization, questioned the assumed *unity* and *stability* of employing organizations inherent in the dominant discourse on organizational entry which favors a notion of socialization-as-assimilation. Moreover, it challenged the concept of ‘newcomer innovation’ as building on the same quasi-theoretical assumptions of ‘assimilation’ versus ‘accommodation’.

I started out research thinking I would reverse the dominant focus on newcomer assimilation in most formalized induction practices, instead drawing attention to the possibility of innovation by newcomers and from newcomer-veteran interactions. After encountering the reality of the case organization, I was left with the problem of understanding “how might we perceive organizational entry in a changing organization?” Yet, it was not as simple as merely disavowing the notion of ‘newcomer innovation’, as I still had reports on newcomers enacting change in the otherwise perceived habitual practice of the organization (see also Revsbaek, 2011). My research question therefore transformed into ‘*how may we understand ‘newcomer innovation’ when the organization is already changing at the time of*

newcomer's entry?' Retaining the question of 'newcomer innovation' was a matter of still aiming to understand the dynamics of organizational newcomers and veterans in processes of entry. As it turned out, the case study practicalities enabled an inquiry into the social dynamics of newcomers and veterans with regard to a changing organization.

Alvesson and Kärreman argue that any initial 'breakdown-in-understanding' should be cultivated into a 'mystery' with the potential to drive theoretical development (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). I cultivated my breakdown-in-understanding ("*how might we understand organizational entry and newcomer innovation in a changing organization?*") by making it resonate with the theoretical question of "*How may we understand organizational entry, socialization and newcomer innovation from a process theory perspective?*" Hence, I perceive such a 'cultivation' of a 'breakdown-in-understanding' in terms of *bringing questions of research to resonate* with each other. In this manner, my research is a response to both questions.

During the research process, I came to appreciate when such practical questions of research resonate with broader theoretical questions. Naturally, when we want to discuss the generalizability of the current case study to entry processes in different organizational circumstances (such as in organizations not rapidly growing, not restructuring, and concerning organizational entry in a labor market not as regional, but perhaps wider/global/more distributed), we end up reflecting on the philosophically motivated, and process theoretical question '*might not all organizations be understood in terms of ongoing processes of relating and organizing?*' and Mead's reminder that '*is not the world a world of events?*' (Mead, 1932). Therefore, perhaps this study has something to say regarding understanding organizational entries in general. If so, the contribution may be perceived as understanding the nature of organizational entry in process theoretical terms.

"Clearly, for Pierce abduction was only a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for the advance of science ... every new hypothesis still has to prove its worth in testing" (Joas, 1996:134).

Following Pierce, Alvesson and Kärreman advice us that additional cases should test, develop, change and reinforce the 'hypothetic over-arching pattern' of explanation emerged in the process of abduction (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011:4). The outcome of abductive reasoning is "*a promising idea for a hypothesis which then, if nurtured with loving care – as opposed to applying force and determination – unfolds according to its own logic until it is finally ripe for testing*" (Joas, 1996:135).

I prefer to think of the work presented in this thesis as a 'ripe hypothesis' ready for testing, perhaps not tested, but definitely ripe.

4. Theoretical perspective of Complex Responsive Processes

“Complexity is a dynamic, a pattern of movement which is a paradox of stable instability or unstable stability, of predictable unpredictability or unpredictable predictability” (Stacey, 2010:59)

In outlining the complexity theoretical perspective of *complex responsive processes* on organizational behavior and dynamics, Ralph Stacey is making the argument that the ontological indeterminism and transformative causality of complexity science (see Prigogine, 1997) is more resonant with the everyday experience of organizational life than rationalist and formative causality inherent in the dominant discourse on management and organizational behavior which is largely informed by ‘systems theory’ (Stacey, 2010; 2011; 2012). “*Complexity is an idea whose time has come*”, Byrne argues (2005:98), in that it meets a need in the social sciences for theoretical perspectives that are “*sensitive to structure but aware of contingency*” (Unger, 1998:24, quoted in Byrne 2005:95). To me, taking a complexity stance is an analytical lever for bringing out the temporal-relational dynamics of what Joas labels ‘constitution theories’ (Joas, 1996:236), and which others term ‘process philosophies’ (Helin et. al. 2014).

4.1 Complex adaptive systems as analogies of organizational life

Stacey considers complexity science, and complex adaptive systems modeling (CAS) in particular, as a *source domain for analogies* on organizational life (Stacey, 2010). To Stacey, regarding complexity as an *analogy* (and not as a metaphor) means transferring the explanatory structure, the “abstract relationships” (Ibid.:130), that is, the dynamics between the individual agents in a CAS computer simulation, to the target domain of social life in organizations (Stacey, 2010). To convey to the reader the kind of dynamic that Stacey describes as analogous to organizational life, we might envision a nonlinear multi-agent CAS simulation to run Boid’s ‘flocking birds’ algorithm enabling us to notice how the many adaptive interactions between individual algorithmic agents over time create fluctuating patterns of activity.

Stacey does not mean to imply that such algorithmic simulations *model* organizational life. To do so would be a reductionist inference of human nature to

algorithmic agents in a CAS simulation. After all, as Mowles reminds us on the wisdom of CAS practitioners, “*mathematical models uncover fundamental truths about mathematical objects and not much about the real world*” (De Marchi & Page, 2008, quoted in Mowles 2014:166). Rather, Stacey argues for interpreting human agency “*in terms of the human characteristics of consciousness, self-consciousness, emotion, desire, anxiety, capacity for imagination, excitement and spontaneity and ability to choose within limits*” (Stacey, 2010:133). Stacey’s analytic “procedure” is therefore “*one in which the abstract relationships in the theories and the models are taken from the complexity sciences and then interpreted in terms of the phenomena of human organizing (...) the approach is to make a translation in terms of human sociology, psychology and philosophy with the purpose of seeing whether this procedure illuminates the experience of the reality of life in organizations*” (Stacey 2010:130).

Thus, considering the dynamics of complex adaptive systems (CAS-modeling) as analogous to organizational life, Stacey and his Hertfordshire University colleagues develop the theory of *complex responsive processes* by, in Mowles’ words, “*drawing on similar insights from the social sciences*” (Mowles, 2014:166), particularly from Norbert Elias’ process sociology and G.H. Mead’s social behaviorism.

What can then be said about these “abstract relationships”, this dynamic between entities, that Stacey adapts as an analogy from CAS computer simulations to the interdependency and evolution of organizational life? “*Models of complex systems demonstrate that nonlinear interactions between large numbers of entities with each responding to limited numbers of others on the basis of their own local principles of interaction will produce coherent population-wide patterns with the potential for novelty, both creative and destructive, when the agents comprising the system are diverse enough*” (Stacey 2010:149). What we learn from a first translation of this dynamic in the light of our organizational inquiries is that each actor interacts with and responds to only a limited number of others within a local sphere. Hence, we place our (research) attention on *local interaction*. Through the activity of such continuous local interaction between agents, a ‘coherent population-wide pattern’ of interaction will emerge. This pattern is analogous to the habitus of a population of human individuals. Besides this, the dynamics of CAS simulations illustrate that as long as we have diversity among the actors (and we always do among humans) these patterns of interaction have potential for novelty from within; they fluctuate. The dynamic insight of complexity science is that novelty emerges over time as the *amplification of variations* in non-linear interaction across a population of agents. We also know this as the ‘butterfly’ effect of *Poincaré-resonance* (Prigogine, 1997; Willert, 2010).

It is just such evolutionary dynamics and the *transformative causality* of iterating local interactions over time that Stacey takes up by analogy from complexity

science to explain the paradoxical simultaneity of stability and instability, of continuity and change of organizational habitus over time. It is the kind of paradoxical simultaneity “*in which local interaction (self-organization) between diverse agents forms populations-wide patterns (emergence) while at the same time being formed by those patterns*” (Stacey, 2010:66).

The causality of *forming and being formed at the same time* resonates with Hegelian dialectics and the interdependency described in Hegel’s concept of mutual recognition. We find the Hegelian notion of interdependency and temporality in G. H. Mead’s social behaviorism, and, although distancing himself from Hegel’s metaphysics, as did Mead, Elias states that: “*Underlying all intended interactions of human beings is their unintended interdependence*” (Elias, 1969:143 quoted in Van Krieken, 2009:355).

“The paradox here is that entities are *forming patterns* of interaction and *at the same time*, they are *being formed by these patterns* of interaction. If we were to think of human organizations and societies in these terms, it would mean that interdependent individual agents are forming patterns of organization/society in the interplay of their intentional acts while, at the same time, those individuals are being formed by the patterns they are creating where what is being formed is personal identity, including ways of thinking” (Stacey, 2010:57).

4.2 Unity of process – taking up Norbert Elias’ process sociology

Much in the manner that Stacey observes the dynamics between local interactions and global patterns from a CAS computer simulation, Elias suggests that “*observing the relation of part to whole in other spheres can (...) help to loosen and extend the mental habits*” (Elias, 1991:18), that we have in terms of understanding the relationship between individual and collective. I believe Abbott would have us think of such a procedure in terms of ‘heuristics’ (Abbott, 2004), that is, ‘thinking tools’ by “*which we borrow creatively from other fields to create a viable interpretation of something*” (Brinkmann, 2012:46). Elias used the analogy of a ‘dance’ to illustrate his theoretical point of societies as “*figurations formed by the actions of interdependent people*” (Elias 1978a:103, quoted in Van Krieken, 2009:355, my emphasis): “*although we might speak of ‘dance in general’, ‘no one will imagine a dance as a structure outside the individual’. Dances can be danced by different people, ‘but without a plurality of reciprocally oriented and dependent individuals there is no dance’*” (Elias, 1994a:214; quoted in Van Krieken 2009:355). The opposition to considering a social structure or order as something ‘outside’ or ‘above’ the interactions among individuals is one that Stacey shares with Elias.

Elias believed that many of the obstacles in contemporary social science are “*built into the very categories and concepts*” of the science, which in turn organizes our habitual thinking (Van Krieken, 2009:354). Obviously, the notion of ‘newcomer innovation’ is laden with the controversies surrounding the relationship between the individual and the collective. Elias’ study into *The Society of Individuals* (1991) is a scholarly commitment to revising our cultural and ‘mental habits’ by which we perceive these matters.

Elias identifies two opposing social theory “camps” writing on the relationship between the individual and the collective/society. In one camp, ‘socio-historical formations’ (what Stacey would call ‘global patterns’) are approached “*as if they had been designed, planned and created (...) [in] the rational and deliberate creation of a work (...) by individual people*” (Elias, 1991:4). The other “camp” is one in which “*the individual plays no part ... A society is conceived, for example, as a supra-individual organic entity*” (Ibid.) and the approach “*tries to explain socio-historical formations and processes by the influence of anonymous, supra-individual forces*” (Ibid.:5). The two opposing theoretical camps reflecting two types of habitual thinking about the relationship between the individual and the collective either *over-emphasize* the agency of individuals or *under-emphasize* it by reifying a notion of some supra-individual ‘whole’.

Stacey warns against a tendency to split off considerations about macro behavior from local interaction.

“The kind of explanation I am trying to put forward is one that avoids the spatial metaphor of levels and so avoids splitting agent interaction and emergent patterns into levels, making possible a mode of thought based on transformative cause” (Stacey, 2010:131)

Drawing on the analogy from the CAS simulations in which any global pattern of activity is always a pattern *in* and *of* local interaction, what cybernetic thinking would split into micro- and macro-level behavior, Stacey considers *a unity of process*. “*Abandoning the assumptions of the autonomous individual, the objective observer and the system means abandoning this doubling of process: There are only the processes of human interaction which simply create further processes of human interaction*” (Stacey, 2010:136). Furthermore, the process is paradoxical in that many, many local interactions across a population *form, and are simultaneously formed by* global patterns in and of such local interaction. Rather than collapsing thinking into ‘either’ a micro-level analysis ‘or’ a macro-level analysis (a ‘doubling of processes’), Stacey and his colleagues from Hertfordshire University argue that we need to think in terms of the *simultaneous* local interaction and global patterns, both located and experienced from the perspective of local interaction. As they say: ‘The global is ever only found in the local’.

Drawing on Elias, who understands societies as “*figurations formed by the actions of interdependent people*” (Elias 1978a:103, quoted in Van Krieken, 2009:355), Stacey argues against reifying organizational structures as something present ‘outside’ or beyond the local interactions between specific people in specific situations, claiming that systems theory, dominant in management literature, tends to do this. Elias raises the question of how it is that a social order emerges, which no human individual intended. “*Plans and actions, the emotional and rational impulses of individual people, constantly interweave in a friendly or hostile way. This basic tissue resulting from many single plans and actions of men can give rise to changes and patterns that no individual person has planned or created*” (Elias, 1939:366, quoted in Stacey 2010:142). Stacey adds the transformative causality of complexity science to explain why such patterns in the interplay of intentions of many individuals would emerge over time. “*A single causal framework of transformative cause replaces the dual causal framework of rationalist and formative cause upon which the dominant discourse is founded*” (Stacey, 2010:149).

Taking interdependency between people as a main assumption and evolutionary drive of organizing (or civilizing) processes, Elias states that from a radical process perspective ‘circumstantial’ factors are perceived as *relational* factors. “*The ‘circumstances’ which change are not something which comes upon men from ‘outside’: they are the relationships between people themselves*” (Elias 1994a, p.480 quoted in van Krieken 2009:356). Elias’ work has been described as a ‘*double movement away from reification*’ (Van Krieken, 2009:356). Elias insists that social life should be understood in its simultaneous *relational* and *processual* character and not as either one or the other. After all, who can possibly claim that anything relational is not something going on *in time*? Elias’ notion of ‘Zustandsreduktion’ by which he means a tendency (in sociological thought) to reduce that which is processual in its character to be a static condition/state, reminds us, that many theorists talking about the relational nature of something (self, organization etc.) tend to reify the ‘relational’ in terms of ‘*a relation*’, thus neglecting the inherent process nature of those social occurrences. The “*assumption that stability was the normal condition of social life, and change a ‘disruption’ of a normal state of equilibrium*” (Ibid.:357), as we see it in arguments of newcomer innovation (for example in Feldman 2012, referencing Lewin’s equilibrium model) is characterized by Van Krieken as exactly such ‘Zustandsreduktion’ identified by Elias.

4.2.1 The importance of historicity in a process theory perspective

“Practically, of course, the novel is constantly happening and the recognition of this gets its expression in more general terms in the concept of emergence. Emergence involves a reorganization, but the reorganization brings in something that was not there before” (Mead, 1934:198).

In his process sociology, Elias insists that any account of the relationship between the individual and the collective should include an explanation of the evolution of the specific structure of that relationship through specific historic times (Van Krieken, 2009). The individual always enter into an ongoing evolution of the relationship between individuals and society. As Prigogine concludes about the premise of ontological indeterminism in complexity theory, the future is under ‘perpetual construction’ (Prigogine, 1997). Curiously enough, claiming the potential for novelty in the future, which means considering things and occurrences in terms of their *becoming*, emphasizes their pasts, that is, past processes and past relationships preceding that which is presently occurring. In complexity science, Prigogine (1997) refers to Poincaré’s notion of *resonance*, suggesting we understand the amplified deviations in and of interaction between objects over time in terms of the ‘relational histories’ (Willert, 2010) of the objects influencing their continued movement in time. As Mead reminds us “*the organization of any individual thing carries with it the relation of this thing to processes that occurred before this organization set in*” (Mead, 1932:49), and Elias states that “*there is no such leap out of nothingness*” (Elias, 1991:21).

Given that we do what we do only “*in a specific place, at a specific time, with specific people dealing with each other [we do so] on the basis of our and their life experiences in an evolving community*” (Stacey, 2010:97), any notion of organizational continuity needs to be understood in terms of individual biographies resonating with socio-cultural formations, that is, with the organizational habitus. Later sections of this thesis on ‘becoming insider’ and on newcomer innovation as a matter of ‘resonant instances’ builds on such insights (see Chapter 8).

Summing up what we now know of the theoretical perspective of complex responsive processes (Stacey, 2010; 2011; 2012), we can briefly consider what is meant by each of the concepts labeling this perspective of *complex responsive processes*.

The *complexity* of the ‘complex responsive processes’ perspective entails a focus on manifold local interactions, and iterations of habitual practice in local interactions over time. It relates to the paradoxical simultaneity and transformative causality of local interaction *forming, and at the same time being formed by* global patterns of interaction. And it has to do with the fact of emergence (Mead, 1932), novelty from within, the predictable unpredictability of a future under ‘perpetual construction’ (Prigogine, 1997).

The notion of *process* in ‘complex responsive processes’ reflects this theoretical focus on *dynamics*, and what Elias, in his double movement away from reification refers to as ‘figuration’, acknowledging the temporal-relational character of social life and the emergence of social order as “*dynamically sustained*” (Stacey,

2012:105). As Mowles makes clear about paradoxical processes, a paradox can not be solved, but only played out iteratively (Mowles, 2014).

We look to Mead's social behaviorism to understand why Stacey calls his theory 'complex *responsive* processes' and not complex *adaptive* processes, as the analogy from the CAS modeling would otherwise have us assume. Drawing on Mead, Stacey reminds us that human communication is essentially responsive, and not merely adaptive. Mead understands meaning as located in the ongoing 'conversation of gestures' between individuals, in which the meaning of a gesture by an individual is constituted in the response to that gesture by another (Mead, 1934). Stacey elaborates on the dynamics between local interactions and global patterns of local interaction by reference to the micro-processual dynamics of Mead's conversation of gestures and the concepts of 'generalization' and 'particularization'. *"In short, the global and the local are paradoxical processes of generalizing and particularizing at the same time"* (Stacey, 2010:167). *"The general can only be found in its particularization in our local interaction and that particularizing inevitably involves conflict"* (Stacey, 2010:166).

I present Mead's concepts of 'the generalized other' and the 'I-me' dialectic in the following sections.

4.3 G.H. Mead: The 'generalized other', the 'me' and the spontaneous 'I'

4.3.1 *The process of generalizing the attitudes of others*

"The organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called 'the generalized other'. The attitude of the generalized other is the attitude of the whole community" (Mead, 1934:154).

Mead describes the generalized other as *"an organization of the attitudes of those involved in the same process"* (Mead, 1934:154). As with other concepts of process philosophers, we need avoid reifying the notions they work from. This also applies to Mead's concept of 'the generalized other'. Acquiring a sense of 'the attitude of the generalized other' is basically a process of *generalizing* across experienced attitudes of specific others engaged "in the same process" (Ibid.) of collective doings, whether it be a family, a society or a work community (an organization). The generalization across specific attitudes of others largely occurs unconsciously.

"These social or group attitudes are brought within the individual's field of direct experience (...) in the same way that the attitudes of particular other individuals are; and the individual arrives at them, or succeeds in taking them, by means of further

organizing, and then generalizing, the attitudes of particular other individuals in terms of their organized social bearings and implications” (Mead, 1934:158).

Stacey regards Mead’s notion of ‘the generalized other’ as resonating with Elias’ concept of ‘habitus’ and Bourdieu’s notion of ‘the game’ in which we as individuals are preoccupied. As with Elias’s ‘habitus’, Mead’s ‘social object’ is essentially a way of *“conceptualizing the tendency on the part of large numbers of people to act in similar ways in similar situations”* (Stacey 2012:103). *“An institution is (...) nothing but an organization of attitudes which we all carry in us, the organized attitudes of others that control and determine conduct”* (Mead, 1934:211).

Getting to know the generalized tendency to act is what Mead describes as acquiring a sense of the generalized other in the community, and what Bourdieu would call developing a ‘feel for the game’ (Bourdieu, 2001). Making his case for the ‘unity of process’, and stating that there are multiple local social processes leading to more local social processes, Stacey describes the process of generalizing in Mead’s theory as that *“we generalize tendencies we observe across many present situations, creating imaginative ‘wholes’ that never existed and never will”* (Stacey, 2010:166). Such ‘imaginative wholes’ are what Mead calls ‘social objects’.

Another way of formulating the interaction between *the general* and *the particular* in Mead’s theory is found in the notion of values. Mead distinguishes between the *idealization* of values as ‘cult values’ and the *functionalization* of values in local interaction (Mead, 1934), in which *“the meaning of the idealization is only to be found in the experience of its functionalization”* (Stacey, 2010:166). The ‘social object’ and the ‘cult values’ are *“imaginative generalizations”* (Ibid.) that are particularized and functionalized, interpreted in local interaction by specific people in specific situations. *“The general [and the idealization] is only to be found in the experience of the particular – it has no existence outside of it”* (Ibid.:167). Stacey describes a statement of organizational vision as an example of an idealization, a ‘cult value’: Idealizations *“may be presented as intended, crafted vision statements for a corporation”* (Ibid.:166), but *“although someone can design and intentionally present statements about values, they can only ever be cult values which have no meaning on their own”* (Ibid.). Such ‘cult values’ only exist through functionalization, that is, as attitudes towards work by specific people in local work-related interactions in specific situations. As Stacey reminds us, *“such particularization is inevitably a conflictual process of interpretation as the meaning of the generalization is established in a specific situation”* (Ibid.:165). It is one such conflictual process of interpretation, particularizing a global organizational change theme of ‘alignment’, that the case study analysis reflects in Chapter 7 on the interplay of intensions between entry case newcomer, veteran coworker and hiring manager.

4.3.2 Remembering Mead's 'I-me' dialectic in socialization theory

"One must take the attitude of the others in a group in order to belong to a community (...) On the other hand, the individual is constantly reacting to the social attitudes, and changing in this co-operative process the very community to which he belongs" (Mead, 1934:199-200).

Often, when we consider processes of socialization, we consider the aspect of 'taking the attitude of others in a group in order to belong to a community'. *"It is in the form of the generalized other that the social process influences the behavior of the individuals involved in it"* (Ibid.:155). We only share culture, and are part of the same community, in so far as we share a generalized other. *"The 'me' is essentially a member of a social group, and represents, therefore, the value of the group"* (Mead, 1934:214). *"In order to accomplish complex social acts (...) [people] need to be able to take the attitude, the general tendency to act, of all those directly or indirectly engaged in the complex social act"* (Stacey, 2010:163).

What is not so often emphasized in literature on socialization processes is the second aspect of Mead's quote above, that we are *"constantly reacting to the social attitudes"* (Mead, 1934:199-200). And we do this by what Mead calls the response of the 'I'. *"The self does not consist simply in the bare organization of social attitudes"* (Ibid.:173). *"The 'I' reacts to the self which arises through the taking of the attitudes of others. Through taking those attitudes we have introduced the 'me' and we react to it as an 'I'"* (Ibid.:174). *"The 'I' is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others"* (Ibid.:175). Mead understands the Self as essentially a process involving what he calls the 'I-me' dialectic. It is through the iterative 'I-me'-dialectic of the self described in Mead's theory, that we explain and understand the necessarily improvisational character of action (Joas, 1996) in which the *generalized* tendencies to act, our habitus, is *particularized* in specific situations by specific people in local interaction. *"People interact according to patterns, themes, habits or routines, which they may spontaneously adapt at a particular time according to the contingencies of the particular situation they find themselves in"* (Stacey, 2010:160). *"The theory of complex responsive processes points beyond habits, rules and routines themselves to the improvisational, spontaneous ways in which they are tailored to unique situations"* (Stacey 2012:105-6). There is always an element of novelty to the response of the acting 'I'. The 'I' is the responding, situational and spontaneous phase of self. The 'I' is our acting and thus our interpretation-in-action of our shared collective doings in here-and-now present situations. As Mead makes clear, it is because of the spontaneous response of the 'I' that we may say *"we are never fully aware of what we are, that we surprise ourselves by our own action"* (Mead, 1934:174). *"It is in such reactions of the individual, the 'I', over against the situation in which the 'I' finds itself, that important social changes take place"* (Ibid.:217). *"The 'I' of this moment is present in the 'me' of the next moment"* (Ibid.:174).

The analysis of case study material led me to highlight and reconsider Mead's description of the spontaneous response of 'I' in continuous processes of socialization becoming a self in a work-related community. One case study participant's description of when he took up voice and contributed, being a newcomer manager in an established management team, aided in understanding the situational, here-and-now aspect of 'becoming insider'. This analysis is presented in Chapter 8. As will become clear in the following Chapter 5, my understanding of the chosen theoretical perspective is as much informed by the empirical stories from case study participants, as my understanding of their stories are informed by the theory.

It is now time to consider the implications of taking such a process theory and complexity science-informed stance for the research methodology of this study.

5. Methodology: Experiencing data, doing analysis

I am only able to write on what I don't yet know. What I know is in the steppingstones of what I am trying to say on what I don't yet know. I am writing, very much in contact with the incomplete, trying to gain grounds of understanding. For a reader to not know this, my work might seem deficient. And might be. I would like to be able to argue that part of the incompleteness, is a quality of the work, occupying itself with the edge of understanding. My reader might disagree.

Revsbaek, Entry in project log, June 19th 2013, p. 154.

Taking up the complexity theory perspective of *complex responsive processes* (Stacey, 2010; 2011; 2012) influenced my methodology and facilitated a different articulation of the experience of doing analysis. My process of analyzing and understanding was a mutual one of theory informing my understanding of the empirical stories conveyed me by case study participants, and of case study participants' stories informing my understanding of the theory. It was an ongoing process of simultaneously understanding both through my lived experience of being a newcomer myself to research communities.

“I knew that I had analyzed much data that had never been textualized into words on a page. Data that escaped language” (St. Pierre, 1997:179). “I still cannot find data bits that produced certain sentences. Indeed, I often felt that all the activities of the narrative – data collection, analysis, and interpretation – happened simultaneously, that everything happened at once.” (Ibid.:180).

“*Why are interviews not observations?*” I was struggling to capture, present and cultivate the rich dynamics between the stories of newcomer, veteran coworker and hiring manager, each talking about their shared work during the period of entry. Their stories were interrelated. Applying a multi-perspective interview design accidentally yielded participants' stories of the same critical incidents from their shared work. Often, these were incidents with some degree of emotionality to them - surprise, disappointment, conflict etc. Interestingly, having three people talk of the same incident, leaving the listener with a rich impression of their relationship and

stance toward the storied incident, placed a strong emphasis on the *fourth* person, the listener – the researcher. Me. Gaining an ethnographic voice in the interview-based study became a way of taking a reflexive stance toward interview analysis, integrating the researcher as a subject, acknowledging the interdependency between the researcher and the researched.

Tanggaard suggests that rather than following prescribed rules, methodology is “*a backward reading of how my empirical material came into being*” (Tanggaard, 2013:2). I developed ways of working from the work itself and from solving inherent breakdowns of understanding within the research process, enabling me to continue with the work in meaningful ways.

Initially, I started out by categorizing my interview transcripts, but I lost faith in differentiating between an *observation* and an *interpretation*. Any identification seemed just another interpretation, so that I had to find other ways of analyzing than to dissect my materials. It was like the paintings of Cézanne: “*The closer he looks the less separated things become*” (Helin et. al., 2014:1). I had to find ways of integrating everything with everything, taking an increased contextualization into account, and yet still present the case clearly. Gaining an ethnographic voice in my writing on what I had learned from the interview conversations and observations in the case organization was “*a method of inquiry*” (Richardson 2011) aiding this process. And so was ‘*analyzing in the present*’ listening to recorded interview material (Revsbaek & Tanggard, 2014). “*Ethnography is always something of an interpretation of an interpretation because what we call our “data” are constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to at certain times, in certain places*” (Van Maanen, 2011:165). Both the storied interpretations of my case study participants and my interpretations of their interpretations reflect the traditions of thought available to us, and which we, in doing our stories, adhere to and adapt in specific situations of understanding.

5.1 Taking a complexity stance in research practice

Byrne argues for “*reconstructing social sciences from within, with the sensibilities of complexity*” and suggests that we examine “*our traditional tools of social research with this perspective informing that examination*” (Byrne, 2005:98). Mowles points out in his article “*Complex, but not quite complex enough*” (Mowles, 2014) that some complexity-theory-oriented social scientists tend to write themselves into a researcher position that in a CAS-simulation analogy equals the role of the CAS-model *designer*. That is, they consider themselves as researchers ‘outside’ the complex interactions that they then claim to be observing and researching. What Mowles argues instead, sometimes with reference to Bourdieu’s reminder that ‘we are all preoccupied in the game’ (Mowles, 2011) and what Stacey claimed before Mowles on taking a complexity stance in our inquiries, is that the researcher herself is a participant in the complex responsive processes and is doing her research as such.

“Reflexivity points to the impossibility of standing outside our experience and observing it, simply because it is we who are participating in and creating the experience, always with others. Reflexivity is the activity of noticing and thinking about the nature of our involvement in our participation with each other as we do something together” (Stacey, 2012:112). “Reflexivity is thinking about how we are thinking” (Ibid.).

From a complexity stance, there can be no outside observer. Any subject is always part of the interplay of interactions that he/she is studying. From acknowledging such interdependency between the observer and the observed (see also Dewey & Bentley, 1949), a practice of taking an autobiographic approach towards analysis of conventional interview material emerged in the work on this case study. It is this methodology that finds its initial manifestation in the paper on *Analyzing in the Present* (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, forthcoming). “*We can go forward not by importing a whole new set of tools and meta-theoretical specifications from somewhere else, but by reconstructing the tools and theories that we already have in complexity terms*” (Byrne, 2005:98). It is one such reconstruction of research tools that is suggested in the paper *Analyzing in the Present* (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014).

Problematizing the rigorous use of research methods in data collection and analysis, Tanggaard advocates a “*following of the object of the research at the expense of procedure*” (Tanggaard, 2013:3). Bayles and Orland writes on artmaking that “*in making art you need to give yourself room to respond authentically, both to your subject matter and to your materials. Art happens between you and something – a subject, an idea, a technique – and both you and that something need to be free to move*” (Bayles & Orland, 1993:20). Rather than considering analysis exclusively as a matter of ‘categorizing’ or ‘condensing’ empirical material, Tanggaard describes inquiry as a search for ‘associations’ between (human and non-human) actors in the field, and tracing changes in those associations over time (Tanggaard, 2013). I would add that the researcher is such an actor herself who’s (ex-)changing associations with other actors in the field must be allowed to happen (e.i. Bayles & Orland 1993), and must be traced over time. As Helin, Hernes, Hjorth and Holt remind us, “*there is little distinction to be made between researcher and researched in a relationship that belongs to the world*” (Helin et. al., 2014:11).

5.2 The role of theory in analysis

Tanggaard continuous to suggest that analysis is a “*theoretical re-working of materials*” (Tanggaard, 2013:7). St. Pierre proposes extensive reading of what she calls ‘high-level’ theory to ensure the statements emerging from our analysis have the potential to rise above ‘pedestrian level’ (St. Pierre, 2014). As with other aspects of my work, Mead’s writing assisted me in also understanding the role of theory in a practice of analysis.

Describing how I currently understand my use of theory in the process of analysis, I am suggesting that we as researchers do not primarily use theory *on* our materials. We use theory *in* our work, inspiring us how to organize *our relation to the materials*. We might understand this as a difference between *applying* theory (to our materials) and *enacting* theory (in our work). In this way, theory is not only related to our materials, it concerns *us* doing the research. We do not bring theory ‘together’ with our empirical material, rather we let theory inform our practice, inspiring us to approach our material in certain ways, guiding us in what attitude to take towards our material in doing our work. To me, Mead and his notion of ‘taking the attitude of the generalized other’ (Mead, 1934) is helpful in understanding this way of working from, with and toward theory, in practice.

The theories we read, both methodology theory and philosophies - in so far as we *assimilate their attitudes as our own towards our work* - become part of what Mead would understand as our researcher ‘me’ (Mead, 1934). In our *doing* analysis, dealing with specific material in specific analytical situations, we are responding to these generalized voices of research traditions, that is, traditions of thought that we claim to adhere to, thus taking certain attitudes toward our material. Reminded by Mead’s notion of the responding ‘I’ to the generalized voices of ‘me’, we then understand research and knowledge creating to be as much about the improvising and spontaneous researcher subject trying to make sense of occurrences, as it is about following discipline and tradition. This is what Mead teaches us about the ‘I-me’ dialectic. Explaining the situational character of any act and thus any interpretation, Joas lets us know “*it is not the actor’s knowledge of his actions which increases, but the appropriateness of the actions themselves*” (Joas, 1996:130-1).

My process of analysis started out as one of adopting the theoretical perspective of complex responsive processes (Stacey, 2010; 2011; 2012) in order to develop an understanding of my surprising empirical materials. But the work brought me to consider myself as researcher, as an involved actor to the point of understanding the construction of ‘empirical material’ in terms of past researcher (case study related) experiences being interpreted/reinterpreted in ‘analyzing presents’ (Revsbæk & Tanggaard, 2014). Acknowledging that “*the world is a world of events*” (Mead, 1932:35) is not yet common awareness in organizational studies, but the presentation of my method of analysis (as presented in Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014) could be understood as particularizing this process theory insight in the research practice of analyzing empirical material. ‘I’ am thus responding to this insight of ‘Me(-ad’s)’. That is, in my practice of analysis, I am taking the attitude of Mead’s *Philosophy of the Present* (1932) toward my recorded research materials (see Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014).

It seems to me, the choice facing qualitative researchers of today - and not less junior researchers - is either to venture (more or less deliberately) unconsciously

into the process of qualitative research, ‘applying methods’ or to constructively take on the vastly destabilizing and questioning epistemological challenges that saturates any current qualitative research endeavor.

To me, this was never really a matter of choice and more one of perceived necessity. Writing about my methodology in the ‘*Analyzing in the Present*’-paper, I treated the issue of methodology *empirically*, portraying the lived experience of analyzing, instead of merely referencing method literature. As “one ‘learns about methods by thinking about how one makes sense of one’s own life’” (Denzin 2004, p.449, quoted in Brinkmann, 2014:722), I have aimed in my writing (and particularly in the *Analyzing in the Present*-paper, Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014) to present to my reader some of the ‘*analyzing presents*’ comprising my experience of analyzing.

5.3 Being a newcomer researching newcomer innovation

5.3.1 Autobiographic narrative: Being the possibly excluded

In a second residential seminar in the research community that I was visiting abroad, the doctoral student and faculty members of the community were discussing a recent withdrawal/exclusion of a student from the doctoral program. The head of faculty said that the withdrawing student had been really struggling with the work. In an email responding to my work, prior to the seminar, the same faculty member had used the same choice of words on my work: “it seems you are struggling” he wrote. As any researcher would know, the word ‘struggle’ is often a positive term describing researcher dedication, commitment, and intense dealing with the materials at hand. Thus, ‘struggle’ might be a quality stamp on my work, if I was said to be ‘struggling’ in this sense. But it didn’t quite ‘sound’ like that when I read his email, though I can’t exactly say why. Perhaps it was the way he stated his critique of my writing rather directly before concluding that I seemed to be ‘struggling’. Or perhaps was I reading in impressions from prior face-to-face meetings contributing to this sense of not exactly being complimented for researcher virtues with this remark.

Situated in the research community meeting, with its members discussing the departure of this recent community member with reference to his ‘struggles’, it seemed to me that a criterion of exclusion was possibly emerging. It occurred to me as so, since I was sensing I too might fall short in relation to this criterion of ‘a struggle’ or, rather ‘too much of a struggle’. I was becoming the possibly excluded. The community members were now more explicitly discussing exclusion criteria. A commitment to reading theory, familiarizing yourself with the theoretical heritage enacted in this community, meeting deadlines, engaging in the frequent peer review process of fellow students’ work, and paying attention to the process of personal development emerging in the research process. As if such criteria could be settled and agreed on once and for all. I had to take voice. I felt uncomfortable. The

courage to speak came with the thought that I might not be the only one feeling like this. And since I was only visiting, I might just as well attempt to take the voice I did not dare. "I guess exclusion criteria also emerge" I said "in what we say, and how it is taken up by others – I think I might be struggling". The comment had an impact. What happened then, I am perhaps blind to, since I was the one being responded to. I had identified myself with the member who had just left/been asked to leave. It took some courage to convey my reflections in the open and make visible the vulnerability I felt, and I think my voice broke off at some point while I was talking. I remember looking at the faculty member who had, in conversations prior to this one, most acknowledged my attempts at putting words to the interactions between us, and implicitly addressing him as I closed my statement. I did so, describing how I was thinking we might be creating a criterion of exclusion related to 'struggling' from the way we were making sense of the departure of the recent student member. Further explaining, that I was guessing this from my own sense of possibly being excluded or losing community status with reference to this criterion, since I was definitely struggling, and had also been described as doing so by a supervisory faculty member of the community. I closed my statement saying "at least I took up voice", hoping it would be acknowledged. Anticipating that it would, from the familiarity with the community cult values I was starting to get a sense of. Almost instinctively and certainly unaware of it at the time, I was pleading for another cult value of the community, one in which I would be included. 'Voicing'. And I was recognized. By the (to me) supportive faculty member. He nodded. I remember noticing the faculty member who first introduced the 'struggle' into the explanation of why a student member had left. He was the one stating in the email that it seemed I was struggling. Perhaps he was surprised by my comment. That was enough - I was recognized.

And so 'struggling' did not remain a criterion of exclusion. It equaled one at some stage of the conversation, but the conversation changed and so did the criterion of exclusion. I was no longer the possibly excluded. I no longer sensed the exclusion criteria, but I guess they were still there. Perhaps to do with 'voicing'. But they were not calling me out. At least not currently.

I was relieved, but still affected. Had to take my time. I had no idea what other student members might be thinking of what I just did. I did not have the energy to attend to it just then, but I knew I had to make amends to fellow students. Or perhaps I didn't, but I would find out if I had to. This was all just a breath. We would go on, possibly together, and what would be next?

It is probably wrong to assume that I was much the possibly excluded throughout the period of this research. In fact, I do not think exclusion was the main risk I faced. Conformity perhaps, although any reader might recognize the sense of possibly being excluded as related to the risk of conforming.

The incident described in the autobiographic narrative took place in July 2013 and I did not write the narrative until November of that year. Furthermore, I wrote it then, because the incident suddenly appeared in my memory as I was trying to make sense of a specific veteran coworker's story in my recorded case study material. Something in the veteran coworker's story conveyed to me in an interview conversation two years earlier, and which I now listened to again from the recording as I was trying to find ways of conveying his story, resonated with my own experience of 'being the possibly excluded' while visiting the research community abroad.

My choice to include the above autobiographical narrative, and the analysis of the case study veteran coworker's story, understood from the standpoint of my own resonant experience, is intended to give my reader an impression of what I mean by 'analyzing in the present' (see also Revsbaek & Tanggard, 2014). The autobiographical narrative, and the case narrative presented briefly below, illustrate what I mean by developing a simultaneous understanding of the case study participants' stories and the theoretical perspective of complex responsive processes (Stacey, 2010; 2011; 2012) and doing so "*through my lived experience of being a newcomer myself to research communities*" (this thesis p. 75). For these reasons, I now move on to present some of the actual case study analysis in this, my methodology section. I do so as I perceive myself as obliged to treat my methodology section empirically, illustrating what I mean by *enacting* theory in our practice of analysis as different from *applying* theory while analyzing data.

The following section is a case narrative on my experience of listening to a veteran coworker's story (X3) describing the departmental practice of which he, the newcomer and the hiring manager alongside other department colleagues were all part.

5.3.2 Case narrative: Negotiating cult values

Case study veteran coworker (X3) talked extensively about an institutionalized practice of 'team training' and related principles of 'process leadership'. Apparently, the practice of doing a monthly team training workshop facilitated by external process consultants had been introduced by the business unit president a few years back. The business unit president sponsored the program of all team training in this way. The team training was meant for team members to get to know each other better and gain understanding of the various individual ways of working, and fostering wellbeing in the work and team collaborations.

As the interviewer of the veteran coworker (X3), it turned out I was not being sensitive enough to the situation that he and I shared. I acted like an elephant in a china shop, as an ironic remark on this practice of team training spontaneously slipped from my tongue. I had heard other case study participants talking about this practice of team training in a fairly loyal, but also disengaged and somewhat ironic

manner, implying to me a low degree of ownership with regard to this practice. I then accidentally assumed that this veteran coworker would express the same ironic attitude towards the practice, but I was wrong. He appreciated the team training and spoke extensively about it. His preoccupation with the team training contrasted with his newcomer colleague and manager's disengagement towards it.

At some point during the first round of case study interviews, I sneaked in the question to a case study participant of whether he thought the practice of team training would carry on if its sponsor, the business unit president, left the business unit. He said no, and I had the same impression. And this was why I ended up acting as the elephant in a china shop in the interview with the veteran coworker. Somehow, I had adjusted myself to the ironic attitude towards the initiative of 'team training', but the attitude was not shared with this veteran coworker, as I was made to realize.

I necessarily had to dwell on the question of why this veteran coworker (X3) spoke with a somewhat superior voice when he was talking about the 'team training' and the principles of 'process leadership'. By contrast, he stated in a disparaging and inferior voice that he felt "*uncertain about what is going to happen* [in the light of announced future layoffs], *because - this is just my own self-image - but, I am an economist by education and the others are engineers*" (veteran coworker X3, for extended interview excerpt see Chapter 7).

Two cult values of the work community were particularly in play across veteran coworker, newcomer and hiring manager stories of the shared work-related interactions during the period of newcomer entry. One cult value was of 'process leadership' related to the practice of 'team training'. The other, and more dominant in the storied entry experiences, was of 'hands-on logistic expertise' related to that of being an engineer and being held in high regard by the department manager considering newcomer a role model in such an area of expertise and he himself being a veteran coworker in need of learning it (see further detail in Chapter 7). As Stacey reminds us about cult values: "*Such values have the effect of including those who adhere to them and excluding those who do not, so establishing collective or 'we' identities for all the individuals in both groupings*" (Stacey, 2010:165).

Understanding, through noticing my own experience of being the possibly excluded, the ambiguous story of the veteran coworker speaking with an inferior voice with regard to some aspects of the work, yet a superior voice with regard to other aspects of the work, I started to think of veteran coworker's story as a possible plea for another cult value of the community - one that would allow him to stay included.

Thus, conducting the autobiographic narrative helped me develop an understanding of this case study participant's story. Additionally, my understanding was brought about in a resonant experience. My experience.

5.3.3 *Using autobiographic narratives to open up interview material*

Thus, the case study narrative and the related autobiographic piece makes up yet another '*Analyzing in the Present*' supplementing those presented in the paper thus named (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014). Van Maanen concludes on doing ethnographic work: "*learning in and of the field is uneven, usually unforeseen, and rests more on a logic of discovery and happenstance than a logic of verification and plan.*" (Van Maanen, 2011:153). Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, St. Pierre described her experience of writing and doing analysis as follows: "*Indeed, I often felt that all the activities of the narrative – data collection, analysis, and interpretation – happened simultaneously, that everything happened at once.*" (St. Pierre, 1997:180).

The paper *Analyzing in the Present* (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014) illustrates of the patterning of associations across experiences of case study observations and interviews, elicited in here-and-now presents of doing analysis, for the construction of case study empirical narratives. Although the case narratives in this paper only include associations between recalled researcher field experiences (as do the narratives in the following three chapters), we comment in '*Analyzing in the Present*' (Ibid.) that we consider such associations elicited in us in here-and-now presents of analyzing, to potentially extend across *all* our experiences, both those acquired during the case study and otherwise:

"Our encounter with the recorded interview in those incidents constituted a small scale 'breakdown of understanding' (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011), eliciting our associations across the empirical material, our experience of being in the interview conversations, situations of presenting our work to others, recollections of theoretical fragments, incidents from our own lives and other things of some importance and apparent relevance" (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014, p. 214 in this thesis).

The above sections exemplify how such recalled "*incidents from our own lives (...) of some importance and apparent relevance*" (Ibid.) supported my analysis of the case study material. In this way, the example presented here of using an autobiographical narrative to open up interview material, drawing on the experience of being a newcomer researching newcomer innovation, is a recent iteration of the notion of '*Analyzing in the Present*'.

I now move from considering the research methodology to engage more exclusively with the case study analyses. Chapter 6 introduces a global organizational change theme of 'alignment' witnessed across the case participants' stories. The theme appears in case study conversations as newcomers, veteran coworkers and managers make sense of the organizational reality at the time of the newcomers' entries. The theme of 'alignment' is understood in context of the organizational history of

change preceding the case study entries. From a plenary dialogue between company newcomers during an induction seminar, we hear organizational newcomers engage in an ongoing debate in the organization on ‘aligning’ work procedures from their experiences of the somewhat unstructured organization.

Understanding newcomers as orienting themselves towards the organizational change theme helps identify an entry case newcomer’s perceived contribution to changed habitual practice as simultaneous socialization and innovation. Perceiving the newcomer to orient himself to *what the organization is trying to become*, rather than *what the organization is*, thus leads to considering newcomers as ‘adjusting to the emergent’.

Chapter 7 explores the local dynamics between newcomer, veteran coworker and hiring manager in a specific entry case, enabling the newcomer to enact desired change. It becomes clear that figurations of shared habitus between people involved in entry processes are not only a matter of relational histories and shared professional habitus, but about how such a habitus resonates with what else is going on in the employing organization at the time of the entries.

In Chapter 8, these preceding analyses form the basis for understanding the process of *becoming an insider* in the here-and-now present situations of *resonant instances*.

PART 3 : CASE STUDY ANALYSES

6. Entry into a changing organization

At this point, we already know quite a bit about the case study analysis. We know that not only were the employee newcomers, who's entry I was studying, new to the organization, but so too were quite a few of their hiring managers (three out of six). And we know that in two of those cases, the hiring manager and the newcomer were previously acquainted having been colleagues in a shared former workplace (case X1 and X3). This observation, together with the marginalized voices of their veteran coworkers (X1 see Chapter 3, X3 see Chapter 5), questioned the inherent assumption about cultural coherence and unity in the employing work community as characteristic of the 'assimilation versus accommodation'-models that organize theory and research on innovation during entry. Rather than a coherent and unified culture within employing departments and the organization, culture seemed to be shared across organizational and departmental borders and to be linked to the relational histories of the involved people. We learned this in Chapter 3.

We also know that the case organization was changing in diverse ways at the time of the study, although we know little of the particularities of these changes and how they influenced newcomer and veteran experiences of the shared work during entry. This will be described in the present chapter.

The analysis presented in this chapter is intended to provide the reader with a sense of what was going on in the organization at the time of the entries. It is argued in a later chapter that the significance of a shared habitus across organizational borders, deriving from professional relational histories between people, is necessarily also about how such prior experience of relational-professional practice resonates with what is going on in the employing organization at the time of entry.

I start by identifying the contribution of an entry case newcomer to changes in habitual practice, realizing that such an act of identification reflects our own perceptions of what is going on in the organization.

Case narrative: Simultaneously identifying innovation and habitus

"He didn't invent it", a veteran coworker says about his newcomer colleague's introduction of a company intranet template into their shared work on an assignment aiming to improve company supplier logistics. The veteran coworker is replying to my interview question of what newcomer had contributed to their shared work.

The veteran coworker's phrase - *"he didn't invent it"* - gained significance in my perception, as I realized that many of the case study participants were describing a

‘preferred way of working’ in this organization as ‘inventing the wheel yourself’, due to a perceived ‘lack of formalization’ of work procedures. As Van Maanen and Schein point out: “*Cultures arise and are maintained as a way of coping with and making sense of a given problematic environment*” (1979:210). Apparently, organizational growth in this company was at the expense of formalizing work procedures, and this required employees to invent ways of their own, while solving emerging tasks and problems. Employees dealing with and doing the work in an organizational setting which they perceived as having none or few guiding principles and procedures had developed a culture of ‘inventing the wheel themselves’.

Case study newcomer (X3) describes the organizational habitus as a practice of “*starting all over*” when faced with a new task. Therefore, introducing an already developed intranet template to the shared work with veteran coworker, appeared to depart from the otherwise preferred habitual practice of veteran organizational members.

My understanding of this incident as a matter of ‘newcomer innovation’ constituted two interdependent questions: ‘What is this organizational habitus, that the newcomer is entering to take part in?’ and ‘Why is this incident identified by the veteran coworker as a surprising and possibly innovating contribution on behalf of newcomer?’ Drawing on Geertz’s understanding of culture as socially constructed structures of meaning, Stacey reminds us “*culture is not a cause of events, [and] behavior (...) but a context within which human action becomes intelligible*” (Stacey, 2012:103). For me - and for the veteran coworker in the interview - to identify the incident of the newcomer introducing an intranet template to the veteran coworker as an occurrence of newcomer innovation, implies a specific understanding of the organizational habitus, in which this incident constitutes an incident of innovation. Furthermore, such identification necessarily reflects the ideology of the identifier.

I found myself in a process of simultaneously making sense of the storied incident and of the perceived organizational habitus.

6.1 Identifying global patterns of articulation across case study material

‘Alignment’ is a foreign word to the Danish language and when used in Danish conversations, the word rather stands out. When case study participants in the Danish interviews talked of their work-related experiences during the period of newcomer entries, the term ‘alignment’ was frequently used. Apparently, ‘alignment’ was on the agenda in the company at the time, and the term occurred and reoccurred across interview conversations.

“Legitimate themes, as public and strategic poses, whether they are formal or informal, conscious or unconscious, are largely habitual. They have arisen in previous communicative interaction and are being reproduced in communicative interaction in the living present with relatively little variation” (Stacey, 2010:155). Although understanding interaction and communication is not just a matter of spoken language, Stacey’s notion of *global patterns* in and of *local interaction* helped identify the re-appearance of the ‘alignment’-theme in the case study conversations³, as a global pattern of articulation across individual participant stories. *“The global is the imaginatively created unity we perceive in patterns of interaction across the populations we are members of”* (Ibid.: 166). Much as an organizational newcomer would do, I generalized across the specific stories to acquire a sense of this organizational imperative so vividly articulated by case study participants. From the variety of articulations of the global theme of ‘alignment’, a pattern of articulation became the ‘imaginatively created unity’ or, as Mead would call it, ‘the social object’ (Mead, 1934), that constituted my sense of the organizational habitus in which a (managerial) request to ‘align’ work procedures was related to a perceived ‘lack of formalization and standardization’ and a habitus of ‘inventing things yourself’.

Many case study participants spontaneously articulated these aspects of organizational life. The theme of ‘alignment’ was taken up in slightly diverging ways by different case study participants (both newcomers and veterans), as they made sense of their work-related experiences and those of organizational life at the time of the entry processes. Drawing on Stacey’s paradoxical conceptualization of *global patterns* in and of *local interactions*, and on Mead’s notion of ‘generalization’ and ‘particularization’, my analysis became a matter of simultaneously paying attention to what appeared a global theme across the interview stories (‘alignment’), and to how each participant took up the theme differently in their particular story. From this focus of attention, a pattern of and between each of the case study participants’ interpretations emerged. Some participants articulated the theme of ‘alignment’ in ways that seemed to resonate more with each other, diverging from the interpretations of others. This created an impression of ‘groupings of interpretation’ enabling me to notice how each case study participant, in taking up the global theme of ‘alignment’, also located themselves within the *figurations of interpretation* of this discursive theme in the organization.

The following section presents case study participants’ stories of the organizational life at the time of the newcomer entries, including their stories of the organizational history of change and thus contextualizing the change theme of ‘alignment’.

³ The conversations in which the theme of ‘alignment’ appeared were both case study interviews and plenary, as well as informal conversations observed during organizational induction seminars.

6.2 The organizational history of change

“I am getting the impression that the organization is in the midst of institutionalizing some of its procedures?” I suggest to the template-case veteran coworker (X3) late in the first interview with him having heard his story of the newcomer introducing the intranet template to their shared work. It is my 12th interview of the 18 case study interviews comprising the first round of interviews with the participants. Quite a few participants have already been telling me the story of a ‘lack of formalization and standardization’ in the organization and the need to ‘align’ work procedures, and I am generalizing across their stories, summing up the impression I am arriving at and which now reappears in this interview situation with the template-case veteran coworker. The veteran coworker replies to my question: *“That sums up the challenge of our organization, really. Put bluntly, throughout the organization we have a lot of things that are described in procedures, but nothing is implemented (...) Everyone prefers not to change what they have and do already. The way one’s been working for years becomes the right way of doing things (...) We face a challenge of doing work procedures in a unified way across the organization”* (veteran coworker X.3).

Participants’ stories of homemade schedules, homemade catalogues and unauthorized Excel documents alongside the official company IT structure witness a process of slowly introducing standardization and formalization into an organizational culture where employees have learned to find ways on their own for dealing with tasks, and now, all in the interest of improving company cash flows, they are faced with the requirements of ‘aligning’ their work procedures to coordinate efforts more effectively. A newcomer HR partner exemplifies the ‘lack of formalization and standardization’, describing his inconvenience in trying to figure out how the annual employee survey is usually done. Even though the employee survey has apparently been repeated for a number of years, he observes an inconvenient absence of standardized timetables and email notices, probably exacerbated by the relatively high flow of employees into his department and through the organization in general: *“Some things seem to have been practiced for many years, but people don’t quite know how it used to be done”* he says (newcomer X1). The introduction of the change theme of ‘alignment’ by executive management a year and a half prior to the case study intensified the company efforts to codify knowledge, business processes and work procedures.

Following a merger of two companies, the organization has been growing rapidly for more than five years. The template-case newcomer (X3) explains this by letting me know that the department in which he is taking up employment has expanded from 12 people three years ago to 80 people today. The average seniority of the business unit is a little over two years, thus witnessing the rapid growth and high flow of employees. The period of rapid growth brought with it a decentralized ‘sprouting’ of new departments and job functions currently perceived to have led to duplicated work between some departments. The template-case (X3) veteran

coworker's story of his own entry into the organization (two years and five months before my inquiry) creates this image of 'sprouting' new departments by means of a 'copy paste'-logic in times of rapid growth, leading to an excess of people, parallel departments doing parallel work and hence duplication:

Veteran coworker (X3):

"It's like 'here's a department! – I just gotta hire some people to fill it up' and then a department next to it figures: 'I just gotta hire some people too' and then another nearby department: 'I just gotta hire some people'– without anyone giving it thought how we are going to tie these things together. At that time there was lots of money in the company"

The veteran coworker continues his account by relating the organizational growth story to his own entry as a newcomer at the time:

Veteran coworker (X3):

"The first manager I worked for had established a new department in this way. In my opinion, he didn't know how this new department was going to fit in with the rest of the organization. And parallel to our department, a similar one was established within the supply chain organization. And so, the function of our department was gradually diluted and eventually closed down, of course, during a restructuring process and I was moved to the other department in the supply chain. This was during the overall 'alignment' process a little over a year and a half ago, when every department in every business unit was requested to restructure to fit standardized structures."// "You enter an organization that doesn't seem to know who is being hired ... The manager who hired me didn't seem to know what I was supposed to be working on ... it was a lot of running around in circles at that time ... I was left to figure it out on my own."

The veteran coworker is expressing the experience of entering an organization where the habitus is largely one of 'inventing things yourself'. As a response to the perceived problems following this period of rapid growth, the executive management initiated a top-down change process 'aligning' unit structures and work procedures across business units. This was a year and a half prior to the case study. Stories of the usual way of working as 'inventing things yourself' and the now requested 'alignment' appears in the stories of newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers, as they make sense of the changing conditions of organizational life during the period of entries. Some aspects of the work are still not formalized

and codified, others are perhaps written down but not yet implemented in practice (as the veteran coworker had informed me: “*throughout the organization we have a lot of things that are described in procedures, but nothing is implemented*”) and yet other procedures seem very standardized and are continuously being so, which is the case with the company induction practices I had witnessed during the case study period.

The most recent development in the organization at the time of the case study is an announcement of future layoffs to take place six months ahead. The announcement is the latest development in the increasingly more urgent managerial attention being paid to company cash flows, deemed necessary due to changed market conditions after the financial crisis.

From the interviews with case study participants, Table 1 presents the history of change preceding the organizational entries explored in this case study.

Table 1: *History of change in the organization*

<p>Earlier change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A merger of two companies <p>Recent change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A period of growth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ High ratio of newcomers/low average seniority (2,3 years) ❖ ‘Sprouting’ of new departments and job functions ➤ Perceived expediencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ ‘Duplicated work’ ❖ ‘Lack of formalization and standardization’ ➤ Managerial response: Introducing a change theme of ‘Alignment’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Restructuring of business units and departments ❖ Codifying concepts, work procedures etc. (e.g. commissioning a cross-unit taskforce to develop the company culture of implementation, specifying criteria for standardized company procedures) <p>Current change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Urgency to ‘improve company cash flow’ ➤ Announced future lay offs <p>Specifics of case study entry cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Newly hired managers - with intentions of changing department practice ➤ Newcomer employees hired. In part, also to enact change in departmental practice ➤ Prior acquaintance between hiring manager and newcomer in two of six entry cases

Besides the expediencies of ‘duplicated work’ and the perceived ‘lack of formalization and standardization’ responded to by executive management with efforts to ‘align’ structures and procedures, the above table contains the *current changes* occurring simultaneously to the case study entry processes. The ‘urgency to improve company cash flow’ seems to impact on how the change theme of ‘alignment’ is subsequently interpreted (see Chapter 7). Additionally, the announced future layoffs make the inclusion/exclusion dynamics in figurations between newcomers and veterans more prominent (see also Chapter 7).

The fact that some case study managers were newly employed in the organization themselves and now hiring newcomer employees, created situations in which intentions to innovate were not only those of newcomer employees, but also of their hiring managers. As described in Chapter 2, these circumstances of newcomer innovation occurring in an organizational setting differ from those of experimental studies on newcomer innovation in ad hoc work groups (Levine et. al, 2001; 2003). Recently employed and now hiring managers who seek to improve departmental performance add to the impression of newcomer employees entering an already changing state of affairs (see also Revsbaek, 2013b).

6.3 Newcomer voices entering the ongoing conversation

As we now know, the theme of ‘alignment’ is very much part of the storied organization in which the case study newcomers enter and take up voices of their own. The narrative of the organizational habitus as characterized by ‘*inventing things yourself*’ due to a ‘*lack of formalization and standardization*’ takes shape across case study participants’ stories arguing the need for ‘*aligning*’ work procedures. The theme of ‘alignment’ seems dominant in the discursive repertoire of the organization at the time of the entries.

I found newcomers to orient themselves towards this articulated theme of change, as they made sense of their experience of the entry period work and interactions. A plenary discussion between the newcomers attending a company induction seminar reveals the newcomers as engaging with the theme of ‘alignment’ and reflecting on the habitus of ‘inventing things yourself’. A transcription of this discussion is presented below.

Ten newcomers participate in the induction seminar. Three of the six case study newcomers are among them (only two of these speak up in the plenary). The plenary dialogue follows short discussions in groups of two on the newcomers’ experiences after arriving in the organization. As the newcomers report back in the plenary session, they start commenting on each other’s stories, collectively discussing their experiences of the organization. Stories of a ‘*young*’, ‘*immature*’ and ‘*unstructured*’ organization surface and the change theme of ‘alignment’ is taken up.

Field note, business unit induction seminar 2010.

Plenary conversation between attending newcomers and seminar facilitator

Sara: “We were saying to each other [in the preceding discussion group of two newcomers. Sara was in a group with Peter] that we have arrived in a young organization. We have entered young teams and young departments”.

Niels (X3): “But we expected it to be unstructured, right? – from the recruitment dialogues, I mean.”

Peter (X1): [from Sara’s group] “Yes, I knew in my mind that it would be like this. But I was surprised anyway, encountering the reality.”

Karl: “I was also surprised - that the organization was this immature. What frustrates me is that we *do* have some clearly described processes and procedures, but people still don’t use them.” [There is a general laugh in the room. People know the problem]. “Somehow, it is accepted in the organization that you do things your own way.”

Peter (X1): “People probably don’t look at the intranet first thing.”

Niels (X3): “Well, I have to differ. I look there. When I am asked to deal with something, I check in the intra what others have done before me.”

Sara: “Did any of you consider that there is a lot of dynamics being structured like that?”

HR Facilitator (veteran coworker X1):

“The important thing is that you as newcomer know what you are supposed to do. It is less important that everything is a mess around you.”

Niels (X3): “I think Paul is in a department where it is important to be in control of things.”

Paul: “Yeah, I am the one who needs to be on top of everyone else’s mess.”

- Niels (X3): “No one has been here for more than two years, so we have many different background experiences, but we don’t understand how to take advantage of the different knowledge. People come from many different places and they bypass the procedures here.”
- Karl: “I would like it, if at some point we said ‘Now we sit down, the 10 of us, and decide this is how we will do things’.”
- Sara: “We are two newcomers in my department. Between the two of us, we are aligned. We sat down together and described to do things.”
- Paul: “What do the oldtimers say about that?!” [participants laugh at the remark]
- Sara: “Well, we are the two of us together, that’s something [she laughs]. “And they [oldtimers] are not that old themselves. The one who’s been here the longest has been here for just seven years.”
- Paul: “Seven years! – that’s like 100 dog years counted relatively in this organization!” [implying this is high seniority compared to the average]

The plenary discussion presents the newcomers engaging with the organizational narrative of ‘everyone inventing things themselves’ (“*somehow it is accepted in the organization that you do things your own way*”) and ‘the need for alignment’ (“*I would like it, if at some point we said ‘Now we sit down, the 10 of us, and decide this is how we will do things’*”). Experiencing the hiring organization as ‘immature’, ‘young’ and ‘unstructured’, the newcomers contrast impressions of this new organization with their experiences of organizational life in their former workplaces and to what they had expected of this new organization, from what they knew of its public image. Their encounter with an organizational life perceived as ‘unstructured’ resonates with the articulated organizational efforts to ‘align’ job functions and work procedures.

In her study on employee induction as an organizational ‘change space’ (presented in Chapter 2), Daskalaki (2012) points out that such an induction dialogue among newcomers and between newcomers and veteran trainers is “*a space in which communities express alternative views, negotiate asymmetries and explore ‘discursive openings’*” (Daskalaki, 2012:107). The case study seminar dialogue among newcomers moves from first labeling the employing organization and the

teams as ‘young’ to then problematizing the fact that “*we do have some clearly described processes and procedures, but people still don’t use them*”, to rephrasing the organizational habitus of ‘inventing things yourself’ as ‘bypassing procedures’. The template-case newcomer’s approach towards the work, searching the company intranet, is mentioned in the discussion somewhat in opposition to the ‘bypassing of procedures’ otherwise perceived as accepted throughout the organization. “*It is in the interplay of all of these activities [referring to ‘intended and unintended actions’ of individuals] that the narrative and propositional themes of organizational life emerge and are both sustained and transformed at the same time*” (Stacey, 2010:113).

The jokes and use of irony in the last comments of the discussion suggest partial consensus on the need to ‘align’ procedures, but also hints at a sense of (an unattainable) utopia that this would ever ensue: Sara: “*We are two newcomers in my department. Between the two of us, we are aligned*”. Paul: “*What do the oldtimers say about that?!*”. Sara: “*They are not that old themselves ... [they have] been here for just seven years*”. Paul: “*Seven years! That’s like 100 dogs years counted relatively in this organization*”.

I return in due course to explore the theme of ‘alignment’, as *what the organization is trying to accomplish*, but have not yet achieved, and as such, giving rise to the notion of newcomers *adjusting to the emergent*.

6.4 Identifying a case of ‘newcomer innovation’

Having understood the articulated change theme of ‘alignment’ in its context of the organizational history of change, and as particularized in newcomer discussions of their entry experiences, I attempt to understand the template-case of ‘newcomer innovation’, in which the entry case newcomer (X3) searches and introduces the company intranet template to the shared work with veteran coworker.

In the research design of this case study, which is to a large degree reliant on the interviews with newcomers, veteran coworkers, and hiring managers, aside from some participant observation of induction seminars, e-learning and meetings with HR contacts and management representatives, I was not much able to observe myself in practice the innovation enacted by newcomers. However, my concern about this never grew strong, as I did not regard myself as capable of *identifying* an innovation for a habitual practice, I knew little about since I was not an organizational member. Instead, I chose in my interview design to ask veteran coworkers and hiring managers to identify the contribution of newcomer to the work, and perhaps even surprising contributions or those changing departmental practice (see more on design considerations in Revsbaek, 2013a).

These design choices yielded stories of newcomer contributions which I then later identified as reflecting the ideology of the observer. That is, veteran coworkers and

hiring managers identified newcomer contributions that seemed related to their own view of what was needed to develop organizational practice appropriately.

Thus, a hiring manager (X1) in the HR department who aims at making the department practice more process-oriented, identifies her newcomer employee as adopting a more *dialogical* approach in assisting a team of production managers to prepare their annual people-development dialogues, than the usually more *instructive* consultancy practiced by veteran HR partners, who focus mainly on IT-based preparation sheets (see also Revsbaek, 2013b). The template-case hiring manager (X3), working to make the department practice of project management more service-oriented, points out the newcomer's project presentation to a team of stakeholders as exemplary, and advises departmental veterans to take note of it (this example of newcomer innovation features in Revsbaek, 2011). Also, the template-case veteran coworker (X3), engaged in developing the company culture of implementing standardized work procedures, identifies his newcomer colleague's introduction of the pre-developed company template into their shared work as a contribution to the work habitus. Identifying innovation appears to be a political act, reflecting the ideology of the identifier.

6.4.1 Veteran coworker storying newcomer contribution

Veteran coworker (X3):

“We agreed we needed a baseline for starting this new kind of dialogue with suppliers. And the newcomer went to find some kind of template. He didn't invent it; he found it somewhere in a presentation in the company intranet. He asked: ‘why not use this?’ And, yes, so we did”.

Veteran coworker (X3) is elaborating on what he considers his newcomer colleague's contribution to their shared work on improving the company supply logistics. Drawing on the discourse of ‘inventing everything yourself’, yet suggesting a departure from it, he says of the entry case newcomer “*he didn't invent it*”.

Veteran coworker (X3):

“He is new [referring to newcomer] - he is taking in more than he is currently giving (...) He uses our intranet a lot for searching information – then he comes across this particular template. I guess almost all company presentations are available in the intranet. I was surprised this information even existed. So, in that way, he is contributing. He is looking for and taking what is available of things that he and I can then ‘steal’ and use for our assignment. In this way, he is passing on what he found in the

intranet, as an inspiration, saying ‘oh well, this just happened to exist’! (...) The rest of us [referring to veterans] are preoccupied with our hands in the soil, so to speak ... and then all of a sudden, there are a lot of things that we as veterans don’t spend time on searching in daily routines because, well, we are not new to the organization.”

I am reminded that the veteran coworker earlier summed up the challenge of the organization to be about having “*a lot of things that are described in procedures, but nothing is implemented*” (Veteran coworker X3, p. 90). The veteran coworker describes the newcomer as contributing by taking what is already available in the organization, and suggesting that this is applied in their shared work - one might say, as way of implementing it. “*We face a challenge of doing work procedures in a unified way across the organization*” the veteran coworker said earlier on regarding the perceived need for ‘aligning’ work procedures. The newcomer explains the reasons for introducing the intranet template to the work with veteran coworker saying: “*What I am about to do, I assume at least 50 people in this company have worked on before me. So it’s about ‘stealing’ and getting things done*” (Newcomer X3). The newcomer is introducing a template known to the organization, but unknown to the veteran coworker.

6.4.2 Newcomer conveying his attitude towards the work

The newcomer’s introduction of the intranet template thus gains significance to me as an act of particularizing the organizational change theme of ‘alignment’, as the newcomer explains his approach to introducing the intranet template and describes his information-seeking behavior. Prior to the induction seminar mentioned above, the template-case newcomer describes himself as ‘a big opponent’ to the approach of ‘starting all over again’:

Newcomer (X3): “I sit down and search the intranet and to find out what has already been created. A lot of people would prefer to sit down and start all over again when doing tasks like this one, but I am a big opponent of such an approach. What I am about to do, I assume at least 50 people in this company have worked on before. So it’s about ‘stealing’ and getting things done. And then when you have been sitting browsing the intranet, you find this material much alike what you are going to start out, and then you say ‘well it’s from 2009, and from another situation, but can’t we just use this?’ And yes, you can.”

Labeling the practice of orienting himself in the intranet as ‘stealing’ and ‘getting things done’ and referring to ‘at least 50 people in the organization’ having presumably worked on similar tasks, the newcomer expresses opposition to the overall organizational habitus of ‘inventing things yourself’: “*A lot of people would*

prefer to sit down and start all over again when doing tasks like this one, but I am a big opponent of such an approach” (newcomer X3).

Relating the history of change in the organization, as in Section 6.2, to the notion of ‘newcomer innovation’, it is clear that the change theme of ‘alignment’ was not introduced to the company by the case study newcomer(s). Instead, the template-case newcomer’s contribution is *an enactment of the desired change* to ‘align’. Thus, the act of introducing the intranet template is understood simultaneously as diverging from dominant practice (that of ‘inventing things yourself’) *and* as conforming to an initially management-introduced request to ‘align’, which has now been taking up in diverse ways in conversations between newcomers and between newcomers and veteran coworkers and hiring managers. *“Such an individual is divergent from the point of view of what we would call the prejudices of the community; but in another sense he expresses the principles of the community more completely than any other” (Mead, 1934:217).*

I now move from identifying the newcomer’s contribution to innovation as an enactment of desired change, in order to explain how this gives rise to the notion of newcomers ‘adjusting to the emergent’.

6.5 Adjusting to the emergent

Newcomer (X3): “I have no trouble setting my own goals, but I need to understand my part in the general game of this organization, and what it is we are trying to accomplish.”

The statement is from the template-case newcomer on his entry into the business unit supply chain department. Quite a few newcomers, and some of the hiring managers who are not so senior themselves, use the metaphor of ‘building up the big picture’ of the organization during entry, meaning figuring out what the various common acronyms and jobtitles mean. How are job functions and departments connected in the overall value chain and how does this match the different geographical locations of factories, administrations and business unit headquarters? Who is doing what work and where? How are the business unit support functions related to the Group support functions? And so on. A lot of relationships to be figured out.

A case study participant (manager X2) suggests that it would have been easier had there been an actual physical map to hang on the wall picturing all this relatedness of the company. *“But then again”* he concludes, referring to the frequent restructuring initiatives in the company *“the map would probably be outdated by the time it was printed”*. The template-case newcomer (X3), trying to figure out his part *“in the general game of this organization”*, makes a comment on how more senior people in the organization often do not have a complete overview of things either:

Newcomer (X3): “It is (...) a challenge to establish an overview of who is doing what kind of work where. Because there are so many stakeholders involved (...) I can see that it is not just me who has a hard time figuring this out. People who’s been here for two or five years can’t either, so this is a challenge the organization is facing”

Resonating with the notion of necessary ‘alignment’ in the organization, the template-case newcomer expresses a concern of people not running ‘in the same direction’:

Newcomer (X3): “I want to find out how things work – I am not the kind of person who throws himself into it all at once. (...) It is a huge organization they have here. Relative to my former workplace, there are a lot of people doing basically the same job for the company. There’s no limit to what they can accomplish, but at this time, it is a bit difficult for me to figure out whether they actually all run in the same direction. It is things like that I need to figure out. I don’t want to run in one direction, only to find out that wasn’t the direction we wanted to go in.”

Through his story, the newcomer makes me aware that inquiring into the ‘general game of this organization’ is not just about getting a sense of the abovementioned ‘map’ or ‘picture’ of departments and lines of reference. It has to do with the *directions*, *intentions* and *approaches* within and to the work. It has to do with getting a sense of “*what it is that we are trying to accomplish*” (newcomer X3).

Although ‘alignment’ has been a theme in the organizational discourse for more than a year and a half, it is still something the organization is *trying to accomplish* but has not yet achieved. A company exit survey witnesses this. This survey, conducted by the business unit HR department among employees leaving the organization and made available to me as part of the case study document analysis, asks if the employees experience “*clear procedures*”, enabling them to carry out their role effectively and about “*easy and timely access to information*” needed to do the work. Out of a total of 30 questions in the survey, these questions are the only two with a below average score and assessed by company HR as a ‘focus area’ in need of improvement. The two specific questions resonate with the perceived ‘lack of formalization and standardization’ articulated across case study participants related to the organizational habitus of ‘inventing things yourself’.

Rather than already being aligned, ‘alignment’ and ‘aligning’ is something people across the organization are trying to accomplish and are also interpreting in ways to integrate other requirements of the work that they perceive as important. In this way, I have come to understand the actors of these entry processes as adjusting

themselves to *what the organization is trying to become*, rather than to *what the organization is*.

6.5.1 *Getting a sense of the emergent*

Back in the interview with the template case newcomer who needs to understand ‘what we are trying to accomplish’ and is trying to ‘find out how things work’, I ask him:

I: “What do you do to find out?”

Newcomer: “I listen to people around me and to those in other parts of the organization. I try to get around, find out what is going on outside Headquarters. And I visit the suppliers”

Interactionist approaches to organizational entry and socialization emphasize the importance of frequent interactions between organizational veterans and newcomers, thus furthering the socialization of newcomers (Reichers, 1987). We know from Mead’s description of acquiring a sense of the attitudes of the generalized other in the community that socialization entails taking the attitude of others toward the work:

“... he [the individual] must also, in the same way that he takes the attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward one another, take their attitudes toward the various phases or aspects of the common social activity or set of social undertakings in which, as members of an organized society or social group, they are all engaged” (Mead, 1934:154-155).

From seeking out and talking to colleagues both in and outside headquarters and visiting suppliers, the newcomer is acquiring a sense of what the perceived community is trying to accomplish across the experience of specific people’s approaches to, and stakes in the work. Organizational themes of change, such as that of ‘alignment’ are part of the interpretive repertoire from which newcomers generalize the attitudes of others. Some themes become dominant one that everyone has to take into consideration, or deliberately (or incompetently) ignore in their behavior and interpretation of the organizational habitus. In this particular case company, the theme of ‘alignment’ is articulated by the company’s executive management. As such, a cult value in Mead’s vocabulary, which he reminds us we only ever find in its functionalization, is taken up in local work-related conversations/interactions between department managers, veteran coworkers and newcomers. The many ways such an articulated (change) theme is adopted and particularized in conversation/action make up the multi-voiced character of organizational life, and thus the potential for novelty in the iterated variations of interpretation.

I suggest, in so far as articulated change themes of the organization resonate with newcomer experiences of the employing organization and of that which is emerging in and from the organization, newcomers will tend to orient themselves toward the articulated change theme. The notion of ‘adjusting to the emergent’ implies bringing the consideration of organizational socialization into an arena of process theoretical thinking on organizational life. That which is continuously emerging in and from organizational life is simultaneously a matter of *what we do* and *how we relate*.

In the following chapter, I consider the local dynamics between newcomer, veteran coworker and hiring manager in which such a global theme of ‘alignment’ is taken up in diverging ways, reflecting the power figuration between the involved people. Chapter 7 is an analysis of the dynamics between veteran coworker and hiring manager of the already introduced template-case.

7. Dynamics of the local interplay

“Any attempt to shift the language ... would clearly shift the figuration of power and in doing so, create a new figuration of who was ‘in’ and who was ‘out’” (Stacey, 2010:189).

Having argued that organizational newcomers orient themselves towards articulated change themes in the organization and adjust to the emergent, I now turn my attention to the interplay of intentions between newcomer, veteran coworker and hiring manager during organizational entry. The first part of this section is a case narrative illustrating the local dynamics between veteran coworker and hiring manager in the template-case (X3) in which manager himself has recently been employed (five months prior to the case study) and is now hiring in a newcomer employee. The second section of the chapter demonstrates how this hiring manager and veteran coworker takes up the global change theme of ‘alignment’ differently from each other, constituting a figuration of interpretations in which the newcomer is entering. Finally, the section deals with this figuration of interpretations between manager and veteran coworker to reflect broader figurations of shared habitus across the organization.

7.1 Identifying power figurations in ongoing processes of research and relating

Everything that comes about does so in the local interplay of intentions between specific actors interacting with each other in specific situations. This is a fundamental assumption in the theoretical perspective of complex responsive processes (Stacey 2010, 2012), and one that draws on the transformative causality of complexity science and Elias’ process sociology. The latter describes figurations of social order emerging, and being dynamically sustained, as the unplanned outcome of intertwined interactions of interdependent people doing planned action (Elias, 1991).

Following Elias, Stacey understands power as an inherent aspect of all human relations. In opposition to a view of power as “*the possession of the few*”, presupposing the independency of autonomous individuals (Stacey, 2010:180), Elias understands power is a matter of *relative reciprocal need* between *interdependent* people. As Stacey explains, such a need for each other (for love, survival, friendship, opposition etc.) is rarely equal, being usually skewed to one more than the other (Ibid.). “*Power then refers to usually fluid patterns of perceived need and*

is expressed as figurations of relationships. These figurations are social patterns of grouping in which some are included and others excluded, and it is in being included in this group and excluded from that group that we acquire identity” (Stacey, 2010:181).

The following case narrative commences in the ‘analyzing present’ of my second interview with the template-case hiring manager (X3), who explains that a veteran employee has left his department since I last visited. As the organization had a fairly high employee turnover, I also encountered this to influence my longitudinal interview design in which I planned to interview case study participants twice, the first time one month after the newcomer entries and a second time three months later. Three case study participants had left the organization by the second round of interviews. Additionally, two had left by the time of my case study report to the case organization. Thus, five out of eighteen case study participants had left the organization during the case study period of eight months. This became part of the history of interactions that I shared with the case study participants.

As described in the methodology of *Analyzing in the Present* (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014), the following case narrative is constructed from my flashbacks to past experiences of doing first round interviews with the hiring manager and his veteran employee. I am trying to make sense of the surprising announcement that hiring manager makes to me upon taking up our second interview three months later.

The inclusion/exclusion dynamics between the hiring manager, veteran coworker and newcomer are perceived from the context that each of their stories create for each other in the experience of the researcher.

7.1.1 Case narrative: Becoming aware of inclusion/exclusion dynamics⁴

In the second round of interviews, four months after the newcomers’ entries, I interview the template-case manager (X3) before I meet up with the veteran coworker. In the interview, the manager first starts talking about a veteran project manager who has left the department since I was last there. I had already experienced a case study veteran coworker from another entry case leaving and being replaced by a second coworker (X1) in my interview design. And in the second round of interviews in the neighboring business unit, arriving in an interview with a hiring manager, I learned on the spot in the interview that his newcomer had left the company, leaving my inquiries short of a second interview with the newcomer (Y1). In a third entry case (of the total of six), I was informed by HR contacts that the

⁴ Part of the following narrative is used in the methodology paper *Analyzing in the Present* (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014) to exemplify the methodology of creating rich empirical narratives from the experience of small scale ‘breakdowns-in-understanding’ (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011) while listening to recorded interview material.

hiring manager had left the company and I would be unable to interview another manager in his place, as 'things needed sorting out' (Y2).

Having been through these instances, now faced with the template-case manager reporting that a project manager of his department had left, I feared this resigned project manager to be the case study veteran coworker. The resigning project manager was said by the manager to have "read the writing on the wall". He was perceived by the manager as not fitting the requirements of the new kind of project management required in the department. Apparently noticing this, he had applied a position elsewhere in another company.

Being in this second interview, with the hiring manager letting me know that the resigning veteran had 'read the writing on the wall', I was reminded of the insecurity expressed by veteran coworker during the first round of interviews and how this resonated with the manager telling me during the first interview with him, that the veteran coworker, to his opinion, lacked logistical capabilities.

Interview excerpt: "Veteran insecurity", 1st round of interviews, veteran coworker

Veteran coworker (X3):

"In such a small team as ours, having two newcomers arrive at the same time is really too much, it creates insecurity at some level, because, well, we know what's about to happen [referring to the announced round of layoffs]. (...) The difficulty comes with this announcement. And it *did* come after the newcomers arrived, so this is perhaps only clear in hindsight, but the newcomers are taken onboard at a time when our need for resources is being reduced, where we don't have as much work as we anticipated and then at the same time, you introduce all these new people. You don't need a degree in economics to figure out that we have an excess of people. And this does create some insecurity. On the other hand, I *do* observe that we still have a lot of assignments in our department, also due to the new manager we've got, a lot of new projects turn up in our department. (...) I feel uncertain about what is going to happen, because, this is just my own self-image but, I am an economist by training and the others are engineers. I was transferred from the business department to this department, so this is not really my original field. This means I am left with the fact that, well, I am an economist and the others are engineers."

I: "So, you are actually a bit insecure..."

Veteran coworker (X3):

“‘Insecure’ is one word for it. On the other hand, I am not. It depends on what mood I am in [he laughs a bit]. (...) Not that I consider it likely to happen, but it *is* true that 40% of all people hired in Denmark are going to be laid off in this round of layoffs.”

I: “That’s a lot...”

Veteran coworker (X3):

“Yes that *is* a lot. So if it had been me hiring, and knowing what I know now of the prospects of layoffs, I would have only taken *one* newcomer onboard.”

Six days prior to this first interview with the veteran coworker, the future round of layoffs was announced and it would be implemented in six months time. It seemed that the prospect of possible future layoffs concerned the veteran coworker. I learned throughout the interviews that some managers considered it unlikely that their department would be affected by the layoffs, because they had a sense of a growing demand in the organization for the expertise of their department’s employees. Still, both managers and employees participating in the case study seemed to remind themselves that decisions on structural layoffs could sometimes end up being a matter of estimating mere numbers on a paper and suddenly, every department being asked to downsize a percentage of their staff. The prospect of future layoffs was thus part of the organizational reality at the time of the case study. I recall asking the hiring manager during my first interview with him about the announcement:

Interview excerpt: “The layoff-anxiety vaccine: Best man/woman for the job”, 1st round of interviews, hiring manager X3.

I: “What have been the responses to the announcement of the future round of layoffs?”

Manager (X3): “The response has been one of everyone asking and inquiring. Each wanting to know ‘what does this mean for my situation?’ My superior manager had a plenary meeting with everyone on the day of the announcement and responded to the questions. Last week, we gathered all newcomers; we had agreed on this in our management team, to explain to the newcomers their situation in case the future layoffs turn out to affect our part of the organization. We let the newcomers know that if the layoffs affect our departments, decisions on who has to go and who gets to stay will not be made on the basis of who came in last. It will be to

keep the best man or woman for the job. We will be looking at professional capabilities, not seniority.”

In his reasoning, the manager was drawing on the everyday saying that when it comes to layoffs and downsizing: ‘The last man in is the first to go’. Apparently the hiring manager, and the management team he is part of, assured newcomers that this would not be the rule if future layoffs were to affect their departments. Instead, the hiring manager underlined that any future layoffs would be based on professional capabilities and not seniority.

I am reminded of this assurance by the manager and his management team - as I recall the veteran coworker’s insecurity upon hearing the manager convey in the second interview that a veteran coworker had left their department. I instantly remember the manager, during the first interview, describing the kind of project management and project manager capabilities that he considered necessary to further develop their department:

Interview excerpt: “Required future capabilities”, 1st round of interviews, hiring manager X3

Manager (X3): “I need project managers with the personality I believe is important to get the work done. People who collaborate smoothly, who are engaged and add energy to the projects they are involved in. (...) It’s my assessment that some of the project managers already in the team do not have the capabilities to succeed with this assignment. The five project managers now in my team have very varied capabilities compared to what I want to do. No doubt about that. And I have to choose accordingly.”

The hiring manager, himself recently employed (five months prior to newcomer) shapes a story of required ‘hands-on logistic capabilities’ and ‘energetic, collaborative personality dispositions’ constituting criteria of what ‘a good department project manager’ is. He views ‘hands-on logistics expertise’ and employee’s ability to ‘collaborate smoothly’ with a diversity of workers in company factories and among company supplier contacts, as important capabilities for achieving the objective of improving department status in the organization, as well as solving the specific work assignment of improving supply logistics. This is the task that the manager assigns to both the newcomer and veteran coworker during the first month following the newcomer’s entry.

Narrating the job requirements, the hiring manager simultaneously describes the veteran coworker as falling short, relative to the newcomer, in ‘hands-on logistic capabilities’:

Interview excerpt: "Manager description of veteran coworker capabilities", 1st round of interviews, hiring manager X3.

Manager (X3): "The veteran coworker is strong in doing project management in general, but he is weak concerning skills within logistics. That's something to work on, building up his capabilities within logistics, so that he is not just generally project managing, but will also be able to do professional counseling concerning the content of the projects he is involved with. (...) I assigned veteran coworker to the task of improving the supply logistics to enhance his capabilities in logistics and for him to get a hands-on sense of what actually works. I assigned the newcomer, due to the strong sides of his personality. He has a personality I know will work well with suppliers and production people - but also to strengthen his knowledge of the daily doings in the organization. It's a good way of learning about the company, quickly getting into daily stuff. (...) Both on theory and professional aspects, there is no doubt the newcomer will be able to give something to the veteran coworker."

Understanding the dynamic between the hiring manager and veteran coworker as to some degree 'tense' or 'unsettled' at the time of the first interviews, I was inclined, from the manager's opening story in the second interview three months later, to keep open the option that it might be the case study veteran coworker who had left the department after having 'read the writing on the wall'.

I then learned it wasn't so, as the hiring manager continued his story in the second interview we were doing, updating me on news from the department. But my experience of anticipating the template-case veteran coworker as possibly having resigned, made me aware of my impressions from the first round of interviews with the template-case hiring manager, veteran coworker and newcomer: Their process of relating was marginalizing the veteran coworker.

The 'we'-construct emerging in the hiring manager's story concerning 'hands-on logistic capabilities' appeared to include himself, the newcomer and his own manager and their new management team. But it excluded the veteran coworker (and others) as falling short of these capabilities. Stacey reminds us about 'cult values': "Such values have the effect of including those who adhere to them and excluding those who do not, so establishing collective or 'we' identities for all the individuals in both groupings" (Stacey, 2010:165). The veteran coworker was perceived by the manager as lacking 'hands-on logistics expertise' and in need of

learning the ropes⁵ of the desired ‘hands-on logistics’-way of working, while the newcomer was described as more competent and capable of “*giving something*” to the veteran coworker.

“Actions of individuals can only be understood in terms of their patterns of interdependence, that is, in terms of the figurations they form with each other” (Stacey, 2010:181). Contextualizing the individual stories of the hiring manager and veteran coworker in relation to each other – and doing so from evoked recollections, while being in the here-and-now interview present, with the hiring manager informing me that a veteran coworker had left the company, having ‘read the writing on the wall’ - enabled an understanding of the veteran coworker as ‘the possibly excluded’ of this entry case. The multi-perspective interview design enabled me to understand the veteran coworker’s concern about being an ‘economist’, with everyone else in the department being ‘engineers’ (see case narrative in Chapter 3). This occurred in the context of the emerged ‘we’-construct of ‘hands-on logistic expertise’ in hiring manager’s story.

The following section describes this figuration between the template-case participants, reflected in the way they each take up the global theme of ‘alignment’, as they describe the shared work between veteran coworker and newcomer during the first period of entry.

7.2 Figuration of interpretations

As we learned in Chapter 6 on the perceived habitus of ‘inventing the wheel yourself’ and the request to ‘align’ work procedures, ‘alignment’ and ‘aligning’ is something people across the organization are trying to accomplish. They interpret it in ways “*to integrate other requirements of the work that they perceive as important*” (cf. above page 100). Drawing on Mead’s conceptual dynamics of ‘generalization’ and ‘particularization’, Stacey labels such non-situated management directives – for example a directive to ‘align work procedures’ – as a second order abstraction: “*The second order abstraction must be interpreted in terms of local contingent situations in the everyday practical activities of people in local situations if they are to have the potential for beneficial effect*” (Stacey, 2010:115). Implied is an understanding of interpretation as *an enactment in practice*, and Stacey goes on to describe this interpretation as an “*inevitably conflictual process*” (Ibid.:165) establishing the meaning of the generalization in a specific situation.

⁵ “*Getting to know the ropes*” is a phrase used by Van Maanen and Schein in their 1979 paper describing the learning process of organizational *newcomers* during entry. It is often repeated in research literature on organizational socialization, exemplifying what I in Chapter 2, call the dominant discourse on newcomer socialization and assimilation in research on organizational entry (see further Revsbæk, 2011, 2013a). The phrase is used in the above section to exemplify a reversed learning pressure, in this case, on the entry case veteran coworker, described in this case study.

“Conversational themes do not emerge out of nowhere but are iterated and potentially transformed in the very actions of communication; and what is being reproduced, each time with unique variations, is themes that have emerged in the previous history of each individual, in the previous history of the grouping they currently find themselves in, and in the wider communities and societies they are part of” (Stacey 2010:184).

Each participant in the template-case took up the change theme of ‘alignment’ either explicitly or implicitly when describing the shared work between newcomer and veteran coworker in the interview conversation. As we saw in Chapter 6, the newcomer (X3) took up the theme while reflecting on his approach to the work, searching the intranet and introducing the already developed intranet template (cf. p. 98-99). This section illustrates how the veteran coworker and hiring manager each related their story of the shared work to the global discursive theme of the organization at the time. The veteran coworker (X3) adopts the ‘alignment’ theme explaining how he understands the task he and newcomer are being assigned. And the hiring manager (X3) takes up the theme, explaining what he intends by this newly formulated assignment for improving company supplier logistics.

7.2.1 Hiring manager’s story

Apparently, the template-case (X3) newcomer, veteran coworker and hiring manager all commit to the effort of ‘aligning’ as a response to the perceived ‘lack of formalization’ and risk of duplicated work, due to poor coordination and a lack of overview in the organization. Yet, the veteran coworker and hiring manager seem to depart in what they emphasize as being the best way forward.

“My goal, and my boss’ goal, is to make improvements - to our everyday logistic processes” says manager (X3). *“It is general hands-on improvements in the supply chain that I have said all along the newcomers should concentrate on”*. The manager creates the impression that the two newcomers (the case study newcomer entering from work in another company and a transferee from a neighboring business unit) are particularly important to him in this respect. *“Before the newcomers arrived, I worked with our neighbor department to define this assignment”*, he says on the assignment shared between newcomer and veteran coworker. *“Prior to their entry I was stalling it a bit, arguing that when one of the newcomers arrived he was going to have this assignment”*, he continues. The task of improving supplier collaboration and logistics is newly invented by the hiring manager following his own recent entry into the organization. He considers the assignment both an effort to improve company cash flow and as a step towards improving their departmental image within the organization: *“It is important to get another type of energy in the organization, and regain some respect for this department, and signal this respect into the organization”* the manager states, implying that the former leadership wasn’t successful.

The hiring manager takes up the organizational theme of ‘alignment’ when instructing the newcomer and veteran coworker on the shared assignment. He wants them to improve the practices of logistics between company factories and company suppliers.

Manager (X3): “... I made it very clear, in the short run it’s all about cash flow. We need improvements in all the little things. Improve the collaboration in practice instead of developing grandiose concepts, thinking we should implement those. Make the little improvements and through this, align procedures and adjust expectations”.

The manager argues that his preferred way of ‘aligning’ is through an approach of ‘improvements-in-the-little-things’, and makes clear that to him, ‘alignment’ is about a simultaneous improvement of cash flow. Thus, ‘alignment’ is not argued from a perspective of standardizing work procedures so that employees can better orient themselves – as we saw in the business unit exit review, deeming “*clear procedures*” and “*easy and timely access to information*” (enabling employees to carry out their work effectively) as insufficient (cf. above p. 100). Instead, the hiring manager’s frequent articulation of the ‘cash flow’-theme becomes the context from which I make sense of his interpretation of the global theme of ‘alignment’ to be about ‘improvements-in-the-little-things’. The urgency to ‘improve company cash flow’ is a recent change in the overall history of change in the case organization, as we saw in Chapter 6. Around the time of hiring manager’s employment in the organization (five months before the case study inquiry and four months before the template-case newcomer’s entry), the executive directive to ‘improve company cash flow’ is articulated. The hiring manager lets me know of his instructions to employees: “*I have been telling them cash flow is important to this company. It has always been important, but is particularly important now*” (manager X3).

Interpreting ‘alignment’ from the standpoint of the recent management directive to ‘improve company cash flow’, making ‘alignment’ to be about ‘improvements-in-the-little-things’, the hiring manager’s view is in contrast to the approach of ‘implementing grandiose concepts’: “*Improve the collaboration in practice instead of developing grandiose concepts thinking we should implement those*” (hiring manager X3). This phrase of opposition gained significance with me, as I had heard the veteran coworker talk of his engagement in a taskforce on ‘company implementation’ initiated by executive management and corporate group support functions working across business units. Apparently, this group-initiated taskforce was commissioned to develop the company culture on implementation processes, by recognizing the problem that the increased standardization and codification of work procedures was not being implemented satisfactory in practice.

The following section presents the veteran coworker's story of the shared work with the newcomer.

7.2.2 *Veteran coworker's story*

In the interview, veteran coworker (X3) links his shared work with the newcomer to his engagement with the group-initiated taskforce on 'implementation'.

I: "So, do you and New-Smith work together on some specific assignments?"

Veteran coworker (X3):

"We share an assignment on how to conduct a dialogue with company suppliers. I am involved with the matter also on a general group level. But we both have the assignment of each getting a supplier to work with these procedures that we are setting out to do".

I: "Is there a developed procedure to be implemented?"

Veteran coworker (X3):

"No, there is no procedure yet. That's what we are going to find out, how to do the procedures. We have a management group saying 'just get into it', and by now, we are about to have a dialogue with the suppliers on this. And that's where the newcomer and I will each participate in a supplier team. It is our responsibility, with the suppliers we are each in contact with, to solve the logistic challenges and sort out which supplier concept is most suitable with all our suppliers – do they have their stocks near our factories? Do we just order according to production needs? And so on. There are all kinds of different concepts of organizing the collaboration with suppliers. And so, he and I are working together on this."

I: "What is the task, or more precisely, what is expected to come from it?"

Veteran coworker (X3):

"The task is to reduce the time of delivery from suppliers and make the logistics more flexible. We have a supplier delivery time of 200 days on some components. By considering different concepts for logistic procedures and through the dialogue with

suppliers, our task is to reduce this delivery time to two or three weeks. We want to do this by looking at the setup of the supplier and our setup considering how, in collaboration with the suppliers, we can create synergies from the setups of the two organizations. That's the task. This is the practical level of our work in relation to the dialogue with the suppliers, but on a more general level, there is the concept-work done by a cross-unit taskforce which I am engaged in as the representative from the supplier logistics department. In this, we are defining how we understand our different concepts in the company and considering what toolboxes we have and how we might then implement each of these concepts”.

The veteran coworker links his understanding of the shared assignment with the newcomer to his engagement with the cross-unit taskforce on ‘implementation’. The veteran coworker has been engaged in the group-initiated cross-unit taskforce since being assigned as the departmental representative to the taskforce by the former department manager before the current hiring manager took up work with the organization. With the executive initiative to commission the group-initiated cross-unit taskforce on implementation processes, the change theme of ‘alignment’ seemed to be interpreted in terms of the ‘implementation’ of top-down concepts.

Accordingly, while the hiring manager interprets the global theme of ‘alignment’ as ‘improvements-in-the-little-things’, drawing on a discourse of ‘improving cash flow’ and relating this to a cult value of ‘hands-on logistic expertise’, the discourse of ‘implementing concepts’ is a group-related interpretation of the change theme of ‘alignment’. This interpretation is carried into the local work-related interactions between newcomer, veteran coworker and hiring manager by the veteran coworker. Opposed each other as these interpretations appear, they illustrate the “conflictual process of interpretation as the meaning of the generalization is established in a specific situation” (Stacey, 2010:165).

7.3 Conflicting interpretations reflecting figurations of shared habitus

The initial analyses in Chapter 3 raised the question of shared habitus across organizational borders from the voice of a newcomer (X3) not feeling ‘completely new’, as he knew certain colleagues and his hiring manager from their shared former workplace. We likewise heard a veteran coworker feeling ‘old school, really old school’ compared to her fairly new manager and the newcomer employees this manager had hired from her former workplace.

Besides possibly sharing a habitus across organizational borders (template-case newcomer and hiring manager having been colleagues in a shared former

workplace), this closing section on the local dynamics of the veteran coworker, hiring manager and newcomer during organizational entry focuses on the figuration of interpretations reflecting the engagement of veteran coworker and hiring manager in different organizational subgroups sharing different common goals. As stated previously, newcomer-veteran dynamics during organizational entry do not appear to be only about 'relational histories'. However, the significance of 'relational histories' is an important argument rising from this case study. Newcomer-veteran dynamics during entry, and the significance of specific 'relational histories', is about *how such a shared habitus resonates with what else (content-relational) is going on in the organization at the time of entry*. The newcomer, and the people with whom he shares habitus from their collaborations in former workplaces, might lead to his way of doing things resonating with the habitus of a significant figuration of people in the new organization. This applies to the case of the template-case newcomer (X3). Or he might find it to resonate only with less influential groupings of colleagues and managers in the new organization.

The preceding sections have shown the template-case hiring manager and veteran coworker (X3) adopting the global theme of 'alignment' differently from each other. In the manager's case, this is somewhat opposed to the taskforce implementation-practice in which the veteran worker is engaged. To me, it appears that they each interpret the 'alignment' theme *from the standpoint of their engagement with specific others, working to achieve specific goals*. The manager thus interprets the 'alignment' theme from the standpoint of 'improving company cash flow', which he shares with the fairly new and now consolidating management team, in which his own manager has also fairly recently been employed:

Manager (X3): "Counting five people in our management team - with both me and my boss as fairly new - we are a completely new management team. There is a sense of direction, involvement and unity. It's completely different [from the former leadership], and everybody can feel this. There is a totally different sense of consensus among the management team members and the organization is bound to notice it."

The template-case veteran coworker (X3) interprets the 'alignment' theme from the standpoint of his engagement with the Group-initiated cross-unit taskforce on 'implementing concepts.

This is the figuration of interpretations that the newcomer is taking up work in and expresses his own voice in, as he enters the supply chain department and is sharing an assignment with the veteran coworker on improving company supplier logistics. The figuration of interpretation is a context for understanding the newcomer describing searching and introducing a company intranet template to the shared

work with the veteran coworker as ‘stealing’ and a practice of ‘getting things done’ (Newcomer X3, cf. above p. 98).

Stacey points out *“it is only when the themes organizing and organized by communicative interaction shift that there will be any change in this organization ... any such shift immediately alters power relations and insider/outsider dynamics”* (Stacey, 2010:189). The figuration of interpretation (of what the organization is currently trying to accomplish) that the newcomer enters, reflects one such shift or ‘shifting’ (ongoing negotiation) of what it means to ‘align’ the work procedures. Each interpretation of this enables a different figuration of people to be influential in the organizational life.

It is not primarily the departmental membership (which the newcomer, veteran coworker and hiring manager share) that makes up the power figuration between those involved, but rather their engagement with different others. And this engagement with specific organizational subgroups of colleagues is reflected in the company cult values that they each adhere to, whilst interpreting what the organization is trying to accomplish at the time. Thus, the hiring manager engaged with his management team adheres to a goal of ‘improving company cash flow’ and a cult value of ‘logistic hands-on expertise’. Furthermore, the veteran coworker adheres to a goal of ‘improving company implementation practices’.

Rather than considering identity with reference to a fixed formal group membership, individual and collective identities emerge in relation to different and possibly fluctuating organizational cult values in a simultaneous process of constituting identity and cult values. Membership is more “webbed”, interdependent and fluctuating, than what we are led to believe from more traditional perspectives focusing on work teams, departments, organizational ‘units’. Specific relational histories gain significance in relation to other relationships at specific times in specific situations. This is the improvisational nature of organizational life. Organizational habitus is then *‘located’ in the history of each actor, resonating with the histories of others relevant to what the organization is trying to accomplish at the time and particularized in specific situations of doing work.*

In the following chapter, I return to the notion of ‘adjusting to the emergent’, developing the conceptual contribution of the research. The chapter presents a perspective on ‘becoming insider’ in the work community in spontaneous acts of *enacting the emergent*. Finally, the chapter concludes as I point towards understanding the newcomer’s contributions and innovative enactments of habitual practice in terms of ‘resonant instances’, in which individual professional biographies resonates with present situations of doing the work.

PART 4 : RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

8. Adjusting to the emergent

8.1 Adjusting to the emergent as an overarching pattern⁶

“In abduction, an (often surprising) single case is interpreted from a hypothetic overarching pattern, which, if it were true, explains the case in question” (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2010:4).

Adjusting to the emergent is the ‘hypothetical overarching pattern’ for explaining the surprising case of this inquiry into newcomer entry in a changing organization. ‘Adjusting to the emergent’ is the conceptual contribution of the research that emerges to replace the old dichotomy of newcomer *socialization* versus newcomer *innovation*.

As the ‘overarching pattern’ of interpretation responding to the breakdowns-in-understanding presented in Chapter 3 as having constituted the inquiry, the notion of ‘adjusting to the emergent’ explains the template case newcomer (X3). He oriented himself towards the global theme of change and enacts the desired change, as shown in Chapter 6. ‘Adjusting to the emergent’ also explains the veteran coworker (X1) choosing to leave the organization, because the kind of professional practice advocated by her new manager does not conform to what the veteran coworker believes to be ‘professionalism’ in the job functions of their department. As we saw in Chapter 3 and in the paper *Ecology of Entry* (Revsbæk, 2013b), this particular organizational veteran adjusts to the emergent by responding to a sense of being “*old school, real old school compared to the others*” realizing “*the ideas that others seem to agree on, is not something I can support (...) And then you just got to go with democracy*” (veteran coworker X1). Her story implies that her decision to leave is due to the people around her (newcomer colleagues, a new manager and manager’s manager) apparently agreeing on the way to go ahead, which conflicts with what she perceives as appropriate.

In both of these cases, - that is, the case of a newcomer enacting a desired change in practice (X3) and the case of a marginalized veteran coworker (X1) - the notion of ‘adjusting to the emergent’ concerns the dynamics of local interplay of intensions

⁶ Analytical figures that have previously been candidates for the overarching pattern of interpretation of this study has been ‘small innovation incidents in a larger context of organizational transformation’ and ‘the ecology of entry’ (for the latter see Revsbaek, 2013b).

between newcomer, hiring manager and veteran coworker. In both entry cases, the relationship between the relatively newly hired and now hiring manager and the veteran coworker create a significant context for the newcomer's entry, socialization and possible newcomer innovation. And vice versa, the newcomer's entry affects the relationship between the relatively newly hired manager and the veteran coworker. It can be summed up in terms of the transformative causality of *forming* and being *formed by*. The analysis therefore proposes the relationship between hiring manager and veteran coworker as a significant context to consider in research on organizational entry, newcomer socialization and newcomer innovation. This significance of the 'hiring manager – veteran coworker'-relationship to newcomer entry, and *vice versa*, is what I have elsewhere named '*The Ecology of Entry*' (see Revsbæk, 2013b). Additionally, Chapter 7 of this thesis illustrates how the local dynamics of interplay between newcomer, hiring manager and veteran coworker is related to broader figurations of shared habitus and of power relations within the organization.

Before engaging further in the conceptual development of understanding organizational entry, socialization and newcomer innovation from a process theory perspective, I wish to explore two additional aspects of the notion of 'adjusting to the emergent'. These help illustrate some implications of the changed focus of attention that this notion introduces to our organizational practices of newcomer socialization/employee induction. The two aspects are best explained by referring briefly to two additional entry cases.

8.1.1 *Adjusting to figurations beyond local interplay*

Adjusting to the emergent does not necessarily lead employees and managers to remain with the organization. As the marginalized veteran coworker we met in chapter 2 feeling 'old school, real old school' explains: "*the job function is changing too much away from the content that I wanted to engage with*" (veteran coworker X1, see also Revsbaek, 2013b). In her case, 'adjusting to the emergent' led her to leave the company and seek employment elsewhere.

Noticing and adjusting to the organizational emergent can just as likely make newcomers turnover early in their employment, as it can lead veteran coworkers or managers to resign. One case (Y2) is the unexpected outcome of a newcomer adjusting to the organizational emergent by resigning after the layoff of his hiring manager. The laid off manager is perceived by newcomer to have been the main initiator of the newly established job function in which the newcomer has now taken up employment. With the hiring manager no longer part of the organization, the newcomer is anticipate being next in line to be asked to leave the company during the restructuring process and the future round of layoffs. The department is now being restructured and assigned different managers. The hiring manager's original vision of an expanded departmental practice, in which the job function of the newcomer was a significant part, is put on hold.

In the vocabulary of Elias, we would understand these changes in the organization, related to the newcomer's job function, in terms of changing power figurations in the organization extending beyond the local department in which the newcomer was employed. The fluctuation of these power figurations expresses in itself the organizational emergent. Articulated themes in the organization and relational figurations are highly intertwined. This is what we learn from Elias' work and the inspiration of his work in Stacey's theory of complex responsive processes: *"It is only when the themes organizing and organized by communicative interaction shift that there will be any change in this organization ... any such shift immediately alters power relations and insider/outsider dynamics"* (Stacey, 2010:189). The layoff of the hiring manager in the entry case expresses a shift in power figurations related to the job function of the newcomer. And the newcomer (Y2) adjusts to the emergent by resigning after six months to take up work in another organization.

Naturally, not every manager has a good sense of the organizational emergent at all times. We might take this entry case (Y2) of a hiring manager being laid off shortly after he hires in a newcomer in a newly established job function as witnessing just this. A manager (just like anybody) has a vested interest in his or her own assessment of things, and therefore might be blind towards or ignore the emergent which is not consistent with his or her own view or plans. Not everything a manager considers important next steps for his department actually reflects the emergent of the organization and beyond. A newcomer has to adjust to the actual emergent of the organization and not just what manager intentionally expresses.

8.1.2 *Adjusting to the emergent as a newcomer constraint*

In yet another case study entry case (X2), a newcomer initiative is overlooked by the department manager while the latter at the same time requests for newcomer to make suggestions for improvement and innovation with respect to departmental practice. The manager makes explicit the criteria for adopting a newcomer's suggestion. Making suggestions a priority is a matter of their significance to what is currently on the improvement agenda, in relation to departmental practice and thus covertly considered beneficial to the overall company.

Manager (X2): "I would like her [newcomer's] 'fresh eyes' to take a look at the things we do (...) Not that we will necessarily change according to her input, but it would be very good to have her opinion (...) Perhaps her suggestions are not practical. Perhaps they don't make sense. We [in this company] might not consider it a good idea, but if she doesn't speak up, there is nothing we can act on (...) I would take her expressed frustration into consideration. But of course, I have to prioritize according to what is most important for the department overall, and not just for her [newcomer] (...) It is what we work on, that is, the assignments of the project managers, that determine what is important for the department to focus on,

and in this way, also what is important for the company (...) We take up and deal with the aspects that make the biggest profitable difference right here and now, in relation to what the project managers are doing.”

The newcomer technical assistant (X2) is expected to assist the four department project managers, but is in fact only paired up with one very busy project manager for her introductory period. The newcomer wishes to widen her collaborative relations in the department to make sure she has enough assignments, and so as not to put too much stress on her busy colleague. Her request is rejected. Only initiatives resonating with the (desired) change perceived necessary by established figurations of people are taken into consideration. By contrast those newcomer suggestions perceived by the manager as motivated merely by inconvenience to the newcomer are rejected on the basis of not matching current priorities. This entry case raises the question of who gets to assess what is organizationally emerging and how specific proposed initiatives correspond with what is emerging. The case illustrates how that which is emerging in the organization is a matter of what is being negotiated between people, and what is not.

To sum up the implications of ‘adjusting to the emergent’, we saw this notion grow out of the analysis of a newcomer (X3) enacting innovation of habitual practice in while orienting himself towards the organizational theme of change, that is, in line with desired change. We now additionally know the notion to illustrate another newcomer (X2) having her suggestion to reorganize her work declined and being requested to perform other kinds of innovative input more in line with desired change. Adjusting to the emergent also accounts for the newcomer leaving the organization (Y2), as he perceives the layoff of his hiring manager to reflect a decline in management support for the function he is meant to establish within the organization. And finally, adjusting to the emergent is required both of organizational veterans and their newcomer colleagues. An organizational veteran, feeling marginalized as her new manager and newcomer employees in her department enact a different department habitus, conflicting with what she considers the relevant departmental practice, adjusts to the emergent, to the changed criteria of professionalism, by resigning and moving to another organization (X1).

The following section addresses the issue of the newcomer being supported by management in practice.

8.2 Becoming insider

During the case study interviewing, when asking the case study veteran coworkers and hiring managers of their experiences with having the case study newcomers enter, it was characteristic that memories of their own organizational entry surfaced and became stories in the interview. In this way, conveying his own entry

experience, the template-case veteran coworker (X3) offers a definition of what it means to be(-come) an organizational insider:

Interview excerpt: "Becoming insider", 1st round of interviews, veteran coworker X3:

Veteran coworker (X3):

"It takes more than a year to get into such a large company as this one, figuring out how everything is related."

I: "When do you feel in[-side] it?"

Veteran coworker (X3):

"When you feel satisfied going to work every day. And when you think that what you do is the right thing to do in order to move things in the right direction, and at the same time, you get support for what you are doing - then I think you are getting there."

G.H. Mead's notion of the responding 'I' adds to the meaning constituted by this veteran coworker's statement. We learned earlier from the account of the template case newcomer (X3) that getting a sense of "*what it is we are trying to accomplish*", is in Mead's vocabulary, about taking the attitude of the generalized other towards the work (Mead, 1934). This means, acquiring an organizational 'me' (Ibid.). Besides the fact that a response of the 'I' – to this 'me' and sense of "*what it is we are trying to accomplish*" - may not always (aim to) serve the purpose of the collective and can also act in destructive ways - '*what you think is the right thing to do*', as this veteran coworker (X3) describes, can be understood, drawing on Mead's phases of self, as the situational and spontaneous response of the 'I' to the 'me' (Mead, 1934). In the veteran coworker's description of becoming an insider, he makes the distinction between '*what you think is the right thing to do in order to move things in the right direction*' emphasizing the situational assessment of the actor, and '*at the same time, getting support for what you are doing*' emphasizing the response of specific others.

8.2.1 Spontaneous

Performing 'what you think is the right thing to do in order to move things in the right direction' is not a matter of doing what you are told or instructed. It is acting from (and in the act constituting) your interpretation of the organizational life at that time. Thus, enacting the emergent is not something you can be instructed to do. It comes from (you) generalizing the attitude of others in the work community that you aspire to be a member of (acquiring an organizational 'me'; a sense of "*what we are trying to do*"), and responding creatively and spontaneously to this in specific situations (e.i. Mead's notion of 'I'). As described in Chapter 4, Mead's concept of

‘the generalized other’ *dynamic*. The process of generalizing across the attitudes of others is ongoing, as we witness specific enactments of others throughout the collective, and as we act ourselves without being excluded. Variations in enactment from specific others, and our own accepted behavior, become part of the population of behavior from which each of us generalizes the attitude of the collective, sensitizing and adjusting us to what is acceptable and requested of organizational members.

8.2.2 *Accepted*

The veteran coworker putting words to the experience of becoming insider, closes his statement: “*at the same time, you get support for what you are doing*”. His phrasing implies that not all acting and responses of the ‘I’ to the generalized attitudes of organizational others are acceptable. And as we know from Mead’s account of the ‘I-me’ dialectic, not all acting is even acceptable to the actor him- or herself (Mead, 1934). We are also capable of surprising ourselves in the way we respond to present situations.

The support one obtains as an acting member of a work community is not given prior to the act, although is anticipated from what is, at the time, one’s experience with the organizational habitus. According to Mead’s description of the conversation of gestures, our anticipation of responses to the gesture we put forward feeds back to form the gesture we make. Community members *adjust to what they perceive as likely to be accepted*. They adjust to that which is emerging in ‘ongoing conversations of gestures’ (Stacey, 2010). But the accept/support is only given to us following our action, finding support for what we did, that is, in the completion of the social act (Mead, 1934). Also, this is when the ‘I’ of a past present (the spontaneous acting) becomes the ‘me’ of the present situation (what we in the collective take to be an acceptable attitude toward our collective doing). “*The ‘I’ of this moment is present in the ‘me’ of the next moment*” (Mead, 1934:174). Furthermore, this is why accepted acts put forth by a newcomer serve to obligate veterans to act in certain ways in future presents as the newcomer and veterans together continue the conversation of gestures. The recognized acting on behalf of a newcomer becomes part of the collective attitudes towards common social activity. It enters into the population of practiced attitudes from which all community members continuously generalize the attitude of the collective; in other words, it merges into (and evolves) the attitude of the generalized other of the community.

Newcomers are, as any organizational member, interpreters of organizational life and our interpretations are found in our acting, in the completion of social acts. Newcomers do not (primarily) ‘bring knowledge’ to the organization (as if carried in a suitcase), as reified concepts of knowledge imply. We need to shift our attention and vocabulary from considering ‘knowledge’ as brought to the organization by newcomers, to instead considering ‘experienced newcomers’ as interpreters of organizational life, reading out and taking up work in our organizations and thus

contributing, through their acting, to diverging or continuous iterations of our organizational cultural doings at the time of their entry.

Drawing on Mead's phases of self, of acquiring a 'me' and responding as 'I', we may now take the words of case study participants to constitute a definition of what it means to become an organizational insider in process theoretical terms: Becoming insider means getting a sense of "*what it is we are trying to accomplish*" (newcomer X3) from a process of encountering and generalizing specific attitudes toward the work of many specific others, and to act in ways we ourselves '*think are right in order to move things in the right direction*' (veteran coworker X3). Being a newcomer thus entails orienting yourself around the emergent, adjusting to the emergent. Becoming insider means to *enact the emergent* and be the *backed enactor* of the emergent. You make a situational, adjusted assessment of what is the right thing to do, in order to move things in the right direction, and in so far as your acting finds support and not rejection amongst (the necessary) others, you are *enactor of the emergent*. In the case study stories, this is reflected in the newcomers orienting themselves towards the desired change of the organization, on the articulated change theme of 'alignment'. The usual way of doing things in the case study organization is no longer accepted. What is accepted is something not yet enacted, so that both newcomers and veterans are required to adjust to the new that is likely to be accepted.

8.2.3 *Situational*

A definition of the organizational insider as the enactor of the emergent explains why an organizational newcomer becomes the organizational insider in some situations, while at the same time not being so in other situations. The notion of the *insider as the enactor of the emergent* also explains why any newcomer or veteran is such an enactor of the emergent only in specific instances, in the ongoing, continuously negotiated and fluctuating organizational conversation of gestures. We saw this in the autobiographic narrative on "*being possibly excluded*" (in Chapter 5).

Being insider, in the sense of *enacting the emergent* is a situational attribute. Therefore, being an 'insider' is not something you start out not being and at some point become for ever. As Joas emphasizes, knowledge is a matter of "*the appropriateness of the actions themselves*" (Joas, 1996:130-1). It follows from a notion of an 'insider as the enactor of the emergent' that no one is an insider all the time, and not all of us are insiders. In accordance with this notion, we might all be understood in terms of being '*outsiders aspiring to be insiders*'. Insiders are those of us who at any present time, enact the practice that we all (in the community in question) take to be relevant and appropriate at the given time and for the given situation, and we only are judged as such in the occurrence of the act.

In the following section, I will explore this situational aspect of being an ‘enactor of the emergent’ in terms of *resonant instances*.

8.3 Resonant instances

I have explained how we can understand becoming an organizational insider, from Mead’s notion of becoming a self in a community and by drawing on his I-me dialectic of the self. In doing so, I have described how acquiring a sense of the generalized other in the community, gaining a ‘me’, is about acquiring a sense of “*what it is we are trying to accomplish*” (newcomer X3) in the work collective in which we take part. And I have described how we act spontaneously, responding to this sense of the community ‘me’ of ‘what it is that we are trying to accomplish’. This is done in ways “*you think is right in order to move things in the right direction*” (veteran coworker X3) understanding this in terms of Mead’s responding ‘I’.

What is left is now to explore, understand and remember the living present, the situation, in Mead’s terms “*the emergent event*” (Mead, 1932) in which the ‘I’ is responding to the ‘me’. Being attentive to the specific situation, the here-and-now, the living present, is an essential part of a process theory perspective, if we want to avoid reifying our concept of self and the concepts of ‘me’ and ‘I’, which Mead understands as a *dialectic*, that is, phases of the process of self.

How then may we understand the situation in which a newcomer becomes insider? Looking once again at the words of a case study participant, drawing on Mead’s work, we are able to understand the situation of a newcomer enacting the community in an instant of simultaneously socializing himself and innovating the organizational habitus.

A hiring manager in an entry case (X2) has been with the organization for four months at the time of the first round of the case study interviews. The manager is thus himself rather new to the organization. As with other case study participants, interviewing him on his employee newcomer’s entry triggers stories of his own entry experience. As the hiring manager talks to me about his newcomer’s somewhat restrained and silent demeanor, he reflects on how he too found himself more silent at the beginning of his own employment. He lets me know that he, to this day, four months after his own entry, sometimes finds himself in a situation where he does not know much of what is going on and the reasons.

Interview excerpt: “Resonant instance – it comes together”, 1st round of interviews, hiring manager X2:

Manager (X2): “In the first meetings with my manager and the management team that I am part of, I was also just attending the meeting not saying

anything, mostly reminding myself there is a reason I have two ears and a mouth.”

I: “What made you speak at some point?”

Manager (X2): “The fact that I knew more and more about what I was talking about. Or that I was gaining self-confidence in contributing to things I could relate to, something I heard or saw, compared to my prior experience.”

I: “So meaning occurs?”

Manager (X2): “It comes together, takes shape, between that which I knew before coming here, and what I have learned here and what I see and hear in the situation that I find my self in.”

In the previous section on *becoming insider*, enacting the emergent was described as doing what felt right in order to move things in the right direction and being backed in doing so. The hiring manager interviewed in this section offers insight into *when* a newcomer takes voice: “*It comes together, takes shape, between that which I knew before coming here, and what I have learned here and what I see and hear in the situation that I find my self in*” (Hiring manager X2). A triangulation of what he learned before entering the organization, and what he has come to know of the organization through being there, and what appears in the specific situation in which he finds himself, constitutes the experience of meaning, enabling him to act in appropriate ways (cf. Joas, 1996).

Stacey describes how any enactment of a habitus, that we have acquired through our history of interaction with many, many specific others, is situated in the living present: “*People are interacting with each other according to patterns, themes, habits or routines, which they may spontaneously adapt at a particular time according to the contingencies of the particular situation they find themselves in*” (Stacey, 2010:160). Any situation calls for a ‘spontaneous adaption’ of habitus adjusted to ‘the contingencies of the particular situation’. Emphasizing the history of interaction, Stacey concludes “*all of this reflects their [the people’s] own personal histories and the histories of the local groupings and wider societies they find themselves in*” (Ibid.:160).

The eliciting aspect that the case study manager (X2) describes above of taking voice and contributing to the work as a newcomer, stimulated my thinking in terms of ‘resonant instances’. A resonant instance is an instant in which newcomer’s previous experience resonates with that which he or she has learned of the organizational doings while being in the organization, and with the present specific situation, in which the newcomer together with others are trying to accomplish

something. The notion of ‘resonant instances’ highlights the situational aspect of being insider or enactor of the emergent. In the case of the recently hired and now hiring manager, he is describing how a specific situation, in which something particular is on the agenda. This has relevance from his prior experience, which is evoked alongside a sense of this new organizational setting, which he is gaining by having already been with the organization for a short period of time. That which is ‘on the agenda’, meaning ‘*what I see and hear in the situation that I find my self in*’, is perceived and identified by the newcoming manager in the eliciting situation to resonate with ‘*what I have learned being here*’ and ‘*that which I knew before coming here*’ (Hiring manager X2): “*It comes together, takes shape*” (Hiring manager X2).

I suggest ‘resonating instances’ as those in which veteran employees and managers may learn new aspects about the organization of which they are part, if they pay attention to the enacted/articulated resonance of newcomer in these instances. However, these are often not expressed explicitly as resonance, but perceived as such either by newcomers or veterans, or both. Such instances are of individual biographies resonating with organizational continuity, and it is in such instances we may seek to know about both organizational continuity and change. I therefore suggest ‘resonant instances’, in which the newcomer’s past history of professional work resonates with what he/she has learned of the current organizational habitus and the specific work-related situation which the newcomer finds him- or herself as a focus of attention for hiring managers, veteran coworkers and newcomers wanting to explore possible innovations during periods of entry. What is required of veterans (and newcomers) in such instances is to analyze the situation, the input from newcomer and reflect on why they themselves find the instance interesting and relevant. We may think of some instances to be regarded as ‘resonant’ by one person and not by another. Any notion of resonance calls for reflexivity on behalf of the identifier, as to why he or she perceives this particular instance to be particularly meaningful. Organizational continuity is a matter of individual histories resonating with that which is currently going on and responded to in a gesture anticipating acceptance by others.

Making ‘resonating instances’ a focus of attention in our socialization and induction practices places an emphasis on newcomer access to getting to know the organization and to taking part in work-related interactions early in the employment process.

Chapter 2 presented Daskalaki’s (2012) focus on induction practices as a ‘change space’ opening up induction also to include the informal talks related to formal seminars during breaks and shortly after seminars. Sprogøe and Elkjaer (2010) focused even more on everyday incremental changes brought about by newcomers asking questions and pondering on existing routines, although the majority of Sprogøe’s analysis (2008) concerns comparing the induction practices of two

companies, and identifying the mixed voices of management wanting to learn of their newcomers and yet initiating induction programs that do not seem to leave much room for that.

The notion of ‘resonant instances’ is not particularly related to formalized induction practices, and is unlikely to be planned, predicted or ‘staged’ in any way. They *could* happen in the ‘open space’ as Daskalaki describes creative induction (Daskalaki, 2012). However, they might also happen, and perhaps more likely so, during the everyday work between newcomer organizational veterans and hiring managers.

PART 5 : IMPLICATIONS

9. Implications for practice

Interactionist approaches to organizational entry and socialization emphasize the importance of *frequent interactions* between organizational veterans and newcomers, which furthers the socialization of the latter (Reichers, 1987). Reichers' work has been used to argue for induction practices in which newcomers encounter veteran organizational members. Although it is increasingly recognized in the research literature that "*some of the more important socialization is decisively local*" (Ashforth & Nurmohammed, 2012:16), most research on organizational entry, newcomer socialization and induction focus on institutionalized socialization and induction practices. The research presented in this thesis is a contribution to understanding organizational socialization 'outside', or aside from, formalized induction practices.

With respect to such socialization of newcomers during work processes, Rollag et. al. (2004) makes a case for engaging newcomers in '*networked assignments*' during periods of entry, urging hiring managers not only to pay attention to *what* newcomers do, but also to *whom* they work and establish relations with. In this respect, Rollag, Parise and Cross (2004) implicitly take up the notion of frequent interactions between newcomers and veterans and add work-related occasions to such encounters. In arguing that newcomers should work with many different people from many different organizational sections in their networked assignment, necessarily requiring collaboration with other organizational member Rollag, Parise and Cross implicitly emphasize frequent interactions between newcomers and veterans in relation to the actual work done during entry periods.

I find much sense in the notion of 'networked assignments', although Rollag et. al. (2004) provide little explanation as to why such organizing of a newcomer's work would further socialization. Drawing on my own case study analysis, acquiring a sense of what the workplace community is 'trying to accomplish' in a more inclusive sense could constitute such an explanation. The conceptual work of Mead (1934) presented in this thesis would suggest that newcomer participation in 'networked assignments' feeds into newcomer processes of generalizing the attitudes of organizational others, gaining a sense of the community attitude toward the work. I argue that such newcomer participation, both in work assignments and in collaborations with veteran coworkers across the organization, also enables newcomer innovation, as well as newcomer socialization.

What I am suggesting, in addition to the frequent interactions between newcomers and veterans (cf. Reichers, 1987), and the work-related occurrences of these newcomer-veteran interactions emphasized by Rollag et. al.'s notion of 'networked assignments' (Rollag et. al. 2004), is that these work-related occurrences – say, the networked assignments - be assignments that take the organizational emergent into consideration. We are likely, in our everyday organizational vocabulary, to refer to such assignments as 'strategic'. That is, an assignment of some importance to the department and the hiring manager, in order to adjust the departmental practice in the desired and appropriate direction. As hiring managers, we might recognize the strategic potential of such an assignment related to what the department is trying to become, through the nervousness, sense of uncertainty, and perhaps the anxiety associated with handing this task over to our newly entered employee.

“What should I do, if I want to make the most (in terms of innovation) of my newcomer employee's entry?” We are not often allowed prescriptive considerations as descriptive researchers, and for good reasons. We do not want to over- or understate our inquiries, indeed should not do so. Yet, being a Ph.D. student at Aalborg University, I have sometimes given a lecture on organizational socialization, employee induction and the notion of newcomer innovation to our part time master students, in our Public Governance and Leadership & Organizational Psychology programs. The students are managers and HR consultants in a variety of mostly public and some private sector organizations. The focus of attention which emerged from their responses and questions to my research can be summed up in this question: *“What should I do, if I want to make the most (in terms of innovation) of my newcomer employee's entry? How can I engage with employee induction if I want to facilitate innovation as part of the entry process?”*

As is likely to be clear to readers by now, I have come to appreciate the elicited character of any knowledge creation. That is, performed knowledge in specific situations (in analyzing presents) in which everything that we currently know (our past experience) informs our response to the situation. Accordingly so, I can take comfort in answering such a question, in spite of its inherent prescriptive aspiration. And I do so, keeping in mind the situational aspect of any response of mine to such a question. I also consider the inevitable situational aspects of any hiring manager taking advice and integrating it into their approach towards a newcomer's entry and specific newcomer-veteran collaborations in specific entry processes. If someone were to ask me, after these three years of working on the topic of employee induction and newcomer innovation, what they should do and consider in their future hiring and entry processes if they wanted to facilitate innovation during the process, I would draw their attention to the following.

9.1 What to do?

From the analysis of the case study entry cases, understanding how a newcomer is enabled to innovate existing practice, and how a veteran coworker is enabled to

recognize newcomers as doing so, five aspects emerge related to the organizing and planning of newcomer work during entry.

9.1.1 *Assigning newcomers to a new task*

Many of the case study newcomers are *assigned newly formulated work tasks* not previously part of the department portfolio, but made so by the hiring manager from his or her ambition to develop and expand departmental practice. This is what the template-case veteran coworker refers to in stating: “*due to the new manager we’ve got, a lot of new projects turn up in our department*” (veteran coworker X3).

As Schein and Van Maanen remind us, culture emerges between people who share common experiences, as they successfully solve an internal or external problem situation (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). With respect to organizational change and changes in organizational culture, Schein advises grouping together people who have not previously worked together to solve a task that has not been previously solved. That is, a new group to solve a new task and thus creating a culture (Christensen & Shu, 1999). In the present case study, assigning newcomers to new and strategically relevant tasks coincides with newcomers contributing to innovation to and through habitual practice and being recognized as such.

9.1.2 *Assigning newcomers to an important/strategic task for management*

Besides being newly formulated, the task assigned to four of six case study newcomers during the first month of employment is considered by hiring managers as a somewhat strategic task for the department, having to do with departmental status and identity in the broader organization. The newcomer thus sets out doing work with a high degree of managerial interest.

A few case study newcomers explicitly express a need to feel useful and to get to work quickly after having entered the organization. They express a need to think of themselves as worth employing (newcomers X1, X2). This is in part, a matter of simply having something to do upon arriving in the organization (entry case X2). However, it is also a matter of significance and importance of newcomer work to the work community (entry case X2, X3, Y2). Newcomers can be assigned a newly formulated task that leaves them feeling ‘parked outside the doors of true importance’. The task assigned a newcomer, as one of the more important ones for the newcomer to engage with during entry, needs to resonate with what the newcomer him- or herself is likely to perceive as important to the work collective, as he/she gradually acquires a sense of what the community is trying to accomplish. In other words, the task needs to resonate with the organizational emergent.

It is always a matter of practical judgment on behalf of a hiring manager whether a newcomer is likely to grow through being assigned this or that ‘strategic task’. Assigning the template case newcomer to the task of improving company supplier

logistics was based on the hiring manager's confidence in the newcomer's capabilities. In their case, the confidence originated from a prior work-related acquaintance between the newcomer and the hiring manager: "*I knew in advance what a good bloke the newcomer is. He has a personality I know will work well with suppliers and production people*" (hiring manager X3). For a hiring manager not knowing his newcomer employee in advance, a bias towards keeping the newcomer from being assigned a 'strategic task' needs to be recognized. Some case study managers seemed reluctant to assign their newcomers certain tasks. This derived from a misconceived sense of respect and desire to allow the newcomer to get into the work slowly, in spite of newcomers having expressed wishes to have tasks assigned. Tolerance for possible newcomer inadequacies should apply to newcomer accomplishments and not to newcomer engagements.

As a side effect, handing an important task to newcomer urges the manager herself to engage with the newcomer during the entry period work, as the task is then related to her own ambitions for the department. Such a co-occurrence increases the frequency of newcomer-manager interactions during the period of entry, which is known to be of importance to newcomers in their socialization process.

9.1.3 *Newcomer's task - a matter of innovation*

Besides assigning case study newcomers to newly formulated work tasks, and in some entry cases, tasks of some strategic importance to the employing department, quite a few case study newcomers were assigned tasks that in their content aimed at improving some aspect of company production or sales processes. This was so for a newcomer HR partner (X1) being asked to develop a new approach for assisting a specific group of middle managers to improve their annual employee development dialogues. It was also so for template-case newcomer being asked, together with veteran coworkers, to improve the company supplier logistics (X3). Also, a newcomer mathematician was asked to invent new ways of calculating variable production costs due to complicated environmental factors (Y3). Yet another newcomer was asked to seek out and develop a not yet established network of company subcontractors in another country (Y2).

These case study newcomers are, in collaboration with veteran coworkers, commissioned to change/innovate existing practice. Thus, the request for change, innovation and improvement was part of the aim of the work assignments assigned to case study newcomers, already during the first month of employment.

9.1.4 *Newcomer and veteran coworker working together*

Assigning the newcomer *and* the veteran coworker of the template entry case to the task of improving company supplier logistics is a matter of both practical opportunity and more deliberate considerations on behalf of the hiring manager (as is often the case with work-related issues in any organization). The opportune aspect

has to do with the veteran coworker and the newcomer being two departmental employees with spare time on their hands, as opposed to other project managers in the team who are heavily loaded with work at the time of the entry and the take off of the specific assignment. The more deliberate consideration is made evident as I ask the hiring manager why the veteran coworker and the newcomer are assigned to share the task of improving company supplier logistics, and him responding as we saw already in Chapter 7:

Manager (X3): “I assigned the veteran coworker to enhance his capabilities on logistics and for him to get a hands-on sense of what actually works. I assigned the newcomer because of his personality, but also to strengthen his knowledge of the daily doings in the organization – it’s a good way of learning about the company by fairly quickly getting into daily stuff (...). Both in theoretical and professional aspects, there is no doubt that the newcomer will be able to give something useful to the veteran coworker.”

In quite a few of the other case study entry cases – The HR partner developing a practice of annual employee development dialogues (X1), the mathematician asked to do new calculation models (Y3), the project manager asked to establish a network of company subcontractors (Y2) – the newcomers were working somewhat on their own. That is, they were not sharing the responsibility for the work assignment with a veteran coworker.

9.1.5 Anticipated importance of newcomer skills for the future success

The template case hiring manager’s story in the above interview excerpt reflects his intentions to change work practices and department image, and expresses his assessment of the veteran coworker’s need for developing ‘hands-on logistic capabilities’. The newcomer is considered to have professional skills and insights relevant for successful departmental practice. The veteran coworker is perceived as in need of acquiring or learning (from) such insights (reversed mentor relationship).

9.2 Attention to ‘resonant instances’

Besides taking such aspects of assigning and organizing newcomer’s work into consideration when planning newcomer entry into the work community, I suggest that managers (and veteran coworkers) pay attention to the ‘resonant instances’ in which newcomers manifest a work habitus, both familiar yet different to their own and the organizational ‘usual ways of doing things’. These instances are opportunities for managers and veteran coworkers to learn about ways of doing in the organization and how these ways relate to broader figurations of habitus. We may, in such instances, experience a sense or a hunch of a trend extending beyond our organization. Such instances may be occasions for an organizational veteran member to aid the organization in adjusting to the emergent of a larger population of

which the organization is a part. Identifying 'resonant instances' calls for reflexivity, both on behalf of the identifier and perhaps shared with the newcomer and/or other community members. As hiring managers, we are ourselves participants acquiring and continuously adjusting our sense of what is going on. In addition, with our situational acts, which are essentially spontaneous interpretations of our past experiences in present situations, we are adjusting to the emergent and sometimes enacting the emergent, and our newcomers are part of what informs us on what is emerging.

10. Implications for future research

10.1 Veteran coworker/hiring manager relationship: The ecology of entry

As stated by Weick, and cited early in this thesis, social science is about suggesting relationships and connections “*not previously (...) suspected*” (Weick 1989:524, quoted in Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011:59). One such relationship is suggested by the research in this thesis to entail the relationship between hiring manager and veteran coworker as a significant context of newcomer entry, and vice versa. Paying attention to the relationship between veteran coworker and hiring manager, as a context of newcomer entry, is brought about from applying a multi-perspective interview design in which interrelated accounts of work-related incidents during the period of entry appeared and reflected newcomer-veteran dynamics in each of the case study entry cases.

When initially constructing the case study multi-perspective interview design, I was portraying the relationships between newcomer, veteran coworker and hiring manager in the form of a sketched triangle of relations between the three:



Many studies on organizational socialization consider either the relationship between the organizational newcomer and the hiring manager, or the relationship between newcomers and veteran coworkers, or both. However, research on organizational socialization often fails to take into account the third relationship outlined by the multi-perspective sketch, namely the relationship between hiring manager and veteran coworker and its significance for the entry of newcomer *vice versa*.

The current case study illustrates the relationship between hiring manager and veteran coworker as a significant context for newcomer entries and raises awareness of this significance of the relationship to the entry of newcomer - and vice versa. This is an important point emerging from the present work.

Research of organizational entry, newcomer socialization and newcomer innovation needs to take into account what we might label the 'relational climate' between hiring manager and veteran coworker, as a context for the newcomer's entry. And we need to keep in mind understanding this 'context' in the paradoxical way described by Elias and in Stacey's complexity theory informed transformative dynamics. That is, a relationship between hiring manager and veteran coworker *affects* the newcomer's entry, and *at the same time*, is *affected by* the newcomer's entry.

The specific case study circumstance of high recruitment frequencies enabled the following six different entry cases to be developed in the same company, at the same historical point in time of the evolution of the company habitus. This allowed for an understanding of how the overall organizational life at the time of the entries was taken up differently, not only across newcomers, veteran coworkers and managers, but also across each of the different entry cases in different departments and work teams.

10.2 Web of professional biographies – shared habitus beyond organizational borders

Furthermore, identifying a shared habitus between case study participants to exceed organizational borders, has exposed '*relational histories*' between specific actors in specific entry processes. This form a relationship not previously suspected when considering organizational socialization, let alone organizational continuity and change during entry processes. Considering shared habitus as a phenomenon that stretches beyond organizational borders and team structures holds much promise in opening up research in recruitment and employee induction, in specialized and thus narrow labor markets, in which a limited population of employees 'travel' between the same handful of companies.

The Danish Labor market is still fairly homogeneous, even though diversity and diversity management is high on the Danish corporate agenda. An increasing number of Danish global corporations have English as their corporate language, yet for the most part, it is Danish employees who work in the departments located in Denmark. With respect to specialized labor forces (such as production engineers within specific industries), the population of potential employees (to hire) narrows

and it becomes more likely that a future employee, manager or coworker will be someone with whom we share some kind of direct or indirect relationship, from a mutual profession or our histories of prior employment. We either know each other, or know someone who does. These networks of individual professional biographies and prior employments, make for a societal context worthy of further attention, when we consider a notion of ‘organizational continuity’, and practice recruitment and onboarding of specialized labor in a labor market such as the Danish one.

In addition, inquiring into organizational entry, newcomer socialization and newcomer innovation from a process theory perspective emphasizing the ‘living present’, led me to consider organizational continuity as a matter of individual biographies resonating with organizational habitus, and drawing attention to ‘resonant instances’, as instances of simultaneously constituting community, membership and thus identity.

11. Conclusion

Paradoxical as it may sound, organizational entry processes are never just about organizational entry. The insight from this case study is that organizational entry processes are about *the reality of organizational life at the time of entries*, and about how what is happening in the organization is taken up in the local work-related interactions between newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers. Considering organizational entry processes and socialization largely in terms of ‘newcomer learning’ and ‘newcomer assimilation’ – as is the dominant discourse in research on organizational socialization – leaves the impression that newcomer socialization and practices of employee induction are considered separate from, though presumably ‘related’ to, organizational life in general. The case study presented in this thesis takes a different approach. Contextualizing organizational entries in the present historical time, and current thematic issues of the organization, suggest understanding what happens during entry as about what generally occurs in the organization at the time of the entries.

11.1 From newcomer innovation to ‘adjusting to the emergent’

The theoretical contribution of this thesis is the development and elaboration of the notion of ‘adjusting to the emergent’. The work is highly informed by G. H. Mead’s pragmatism and the perspective of complex responsive processes perspective from Ralph Stacey⁷, Douglas Griffin and Chris Mowles. The work derives from the ‘breakdown-in-understanding’ (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011) constituted by my encounter with the entry stories of newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers in a case study organization, questioning the assumption of organizational *unity* and *stability* often implied in research on organizational socialization (see Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Feldman 2012).

I add to the conceptual debate on organizational socialization an explication of the spontaneous and necessarily improvisational aspect of participating as a newcomer

⁷ Ralph Stacey, Douglas Griffin and Patricia Shaw are the colleagues who initially formulate the perspective of *Complex Responsive Processes*, drawing on analogies from complex adaptive systems theory, G.H Mead’s theory of the social self and conversation of gestures and Norbert Elias’ process sociology. Chris Mowles writes recently from the perspective of complex responsive processes with regard to management (Mowles, 2011; 2015), evaluation (Mowles, 2014) and development management (Mowles, 2010). In my work, I have not had the opportunity to include explicitly the work of Shaw. I found Douglas Griffin’s work on *The Emergence of Leadership* helpful in understanding the contribution of Mead’s philosophy to the theory of *Complex Responsive Processes* (Griffin, 2002).

in organizational life. Reminded of the responding 'I' in Mead's 'I-me' dialectic as a necessary aspect of the process on becoming a self in a collective, we are enabled to think of newcomer socialization and newcomer innovation, not as separable and distinct phenomena, but as aspects of the same enactment of organizational habitus on behalf of a newcomer interpreting organizational life from his or her own professional biography and unique history of interaction with others.

As the 'hypothetic overarching pattern' for explaining the surprising case of this inquiry into newcomer entries in a changing organization, '*adjusting to the emergent*' is the conceptual contribution of this research, emerging to replace the old dichotomy of newcomer *socialization* versus newcomer *innovation*. Dissolving the dichotomy of socialization versus innovation leaves us with *socialized innovation*. The innovation attained from adjusting to the emergent is the innovation having an impact in the organization, however small or significant the innovation might be. Acknowledged innovation is understood as the spontaneous interpretation of organizational life that is not rejected by community others. We have no way of predicting the innovation. We have no way of instructing it; it is not something we can preserve and that we should ensure to tap before it is gone. It is something that that we can pay attention to as it happens, in everyday work-related interactions and negotiations, through surprises both as newcomer and veteran, enabling us to consider if it might perhaps be useful or just desirable to change our practice in the newly manifested direction.

Any innovation on behalf of a newcomer always appears in the context of a broader (organizational, societal) change and is in correspondence with this. The notion of 'adjusting to the emergent' reflects this aspect.

This notion of itself emerged in the case study analysis, from working to understand the expressed entry experiences of case study participants who were newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers, in times of change in the onboarding organization. If considered a process theoretical notion, 'adjusting to the emergent' is a viable concept for describing organizational entry processes in any organization.

Considering organizational entry on the grounds of process theoretical perspectives of organizational life, and newcomer-veteran encounters in terms of ongoing responsive conversation of gestures, holds promise for organizational socialization research that goes beyond the conclusion of this study. I hope to have made clear some of the implications and advances of viewing organizational entry processes from such a process theory perspective, and considering organizational entries as shared social phenomena between newcomers and veterans.

11.2 From ‘newcomer’ and ‘veteran’ to notions of ‘being the possibly excluded’ and ‘enactor of the emergent’

“To categorize is to place experience in one category rather than another... The effect is to locate similarity within the category, so obliterating differences between experiences in that category, and locate difference between categories while obliterating any similarity between them” (Stacey, 2010: 188). “The very process of categorizing itself makes the dynamic [of inclusion-exclusion] inevitable” (Ibid.:188).

The work presented in this thesis cautions against considering organizational newcomers (newly employed individuals) and veterans (more senior employees) as two internally homogenous groups. I have demonstrated that the status of being either an outsider or established as a newcomer or veteran, depends on the figurations of relationships between the specific people engaged in local work-related interactions. I have also shown such figurations to reflect (in part) the ‘relational histories’ between the people involved, and the significance of these relational histories, and the consequently shared habitus to be dependent on what is currently going on in the organization in terms of what is valued. I have thus depicted the organizational veteran to be the ‘possibly excluded’ and the organizational newcomer to be ‘the enactor of the emergent’, as the established players in the figuration of relationships.

Naturally, not all newcomers are ‘enactors of the emergent’ – perhaps far from it. And not all veterans experience themselves as potentially excluded in the face of welcoming new colleagues – likewise, far from that. However, inquiring into these surprising cases of organizational entry into a changing organization has opened up the dynamics between newcomers and veteran as related to fluctuating organizational cult values, that is, fluctuations in organizational habitus. Drawing on Elias’ and Scotson’s work on the relative group coherence between established and outsider groups (Elias & Scotson, 1994), we can hypothesize that the significance of relational histories and shared prior work-related habitus might be greater in organizations with low group coherence due, say, to high employee flows and thus low average seniority. We might be more likely to encounter reversed established-outsider dynamics between prior acquainted newcomers and veterans in organizations with low internal coherence.

11.3 Introducing a process theory for research on organizational socialization

The notion of ‘a changing organization’ was not primarily a deductive, theoretical point made from taking a complexity theory perspective towards the analysis of

collected data. The choice of familiarizing myself with the complexity stance and the specific perspective of *complex responsive processes* (Stacey, 2010; 2012), Mead's pragmatist philosophy, and Elias' process sociology, was motivated by a need to make sense of the question of "*how do I understand this 'organization' that newcomers enter, when I can no longer consider it a stable entity?*"

The fact that newcomers are required to *attune to what is emerging* in the organization would in itself be a mundane observation, if viewing organizational life from a process theory perspective, such as the complexity theoretical perspective of complex responsive processes (Stacey, 2010; 2011; 2012; Griffin, 2002; Mowles, 2011). However, this issue has not been previously explored with respect to organizational entry processes. Studies on organizational entry and socialization have yet to take up such radical process paradigm stances. Acknowledging that "*the world is a world of events*", as Mead reminds us (1932:35), is not yet a mature awareness in organizational studies.

11.4 Researcher reflexivity: Being a newcomer researching newcomer innovation

"Each one experiences life from a different angle than anybody else, and consequently has something distinctive to give others if he can turn his experiences into ideas and pass them on to others. Each individual that comes into the world is a new beginning; the universe itself is, as it were, taking a fresh start in him trying to do something, even on a small scale, that it has never done before" (Dewey 1929/1930, pp. 127-143, "Construction and Criticism" in Joas, 1996).

Already at an early point, I considered including the above quote from Dewey as an introduction to the inquiry into possible newcomer innovation during organizational entry processes. It is a relief that I can now instead conclude with it, and this not only with respect to the content of this case study inquiry, but also in relation to the methodology development that emerged from the work. I was the newcomer researching newcomer innovation. Furthermore, from being in this position, I was able to add insight into the case study material on newcomers, interactions between newcomers and veterans, and the possible newcomer innovation that was otherwise salient.

Mead 'seated reality in the present' (Mead, 1932) and Stacey (2010; 2012) and Mowles (2011; 2014) reminded me that research is not only *of* reality, but a practice done *in* reality - thus, in the present (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014) - Alvesson and

Kärreman (2011), and Brinkmann (2012; 2014) and Joas (1996). This made the notion of abduction so corporeal to me, that I was able to describe my experience of doing qualitative research in such a distinct way as for me to hand it on to others (see Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014).

“we are already in the post “post” period – Post-poststructuralism, post-postmodernism, post-experimental. What this means for interpretive, ethnographic practices is still not clear. But it is certain that things will never again be the same“ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:15).

Eventually, ‘adjusting to the emergent’ also became a guiding metaphor explaining my researcher attempts to seek out and taking up in my research practice, the new epistemologies of qualitative research of which I perceive the turn to complexity (or turn to time and temporality in process philosophies) to be part. Reading Byrne (2005) bolstered my confidence in rethinking conventional social science practices (in my case interview analysis) from the sensitivities introduced by complexity theory. So too did the encouragement of Fenwick, Edwards, and Sawchuk (2011) for researchers to ‘trace the entanglements’ of the research process (Ibid.:43), and the statement of Helin, Hernes, Hjorth and Holt (2014), while taking a process theoretical approach toward organizational studies, that “*there is little distinction to be made between researcher and researched in a relationship that belongs to the world*” (Helin et. al., 2014:11). A consolidating tradition of autobiography enabled me to understand my reflexive approach toward experiencing and analyzing interview recordings while *Analyzing in the Present* (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014), as an *autobiographic stance toward analyzing conventional interview material* on which, I am happy to conclude, there is still more to say.

Dear reader, I hope my journey has been worth your while reading!

Epilog

The 12th of November 2014, email from a case company contact upon reading the final thesis:

“Reading your very interesting thesis took me on a time travel back to the years around 2010, and I drew parallels between then and today where we have started describing our internal organizational world as a world of constant change, rather than a period of change ...”

References

- Andersen, T., Haahr, J.H., Hansen, M.E., & Holm-Pedersen, M. (2008). *Job Mobility in the European Union: Optimising its Social and Economic Benefits, Final report*. Danish Technological Institute, Centre for Policy and Business Analysis, April 2008.
- Alvesson, M. & Kärreman, D. (2011). *Qualitative Research and Theory Development. Mystery as Method*. London: Sage.
- Alvesson, M. & Sköldberg, K. (2010). *Reflexive Methodology. New Vistas for Qualitative Research, 2nd Ed*. London: Sage.
- Ashford, S. & Nurmohamed, S. (2012). From Past to Present and Into the Future: A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Socialization Literature. In C. R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization, 4th Ed*. (pp. 8-24). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ashforth, B.E., Sluss, D.M., & Saks, A.M. (2007). Socialization tactics, proactive behavior, and newcomer learning: Integrating socialization models. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 70*, 447-462.
- Bauer, T.N., & Erdogan, B. (2011). The effective onboarding of new employees. In S. Zedeck (Ed.), *APA Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, vol. 3: Maintaining, Expanding, and Contracting the Organization* (pp. 51-64). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Bayles, D. & Orland, T. (1993). *Art & Fear. Observations on the perils (and rewards) of artmaking*. Saint Paul, MN: The Image Continuum Press.
- Bird, C.M. (2005). How I stopped dreading and learned to love transcription. *Qualitative Inquiry, 11*(2), 226-248. doi: 10.1177/1077800404273413
- Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Practical Reason*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Brinkmann, S. (2012). *Qualitative Inquiry in Everyday Life. Working with Everyday Life Materials*. London: Sage.
- Brinkmann, S. (2014). Doing without data. *Qualitative Inquiry, vol. 20*(6), pp. 720-725. doi: 10.1177/1077800414530254

- Byrne, D. (2005). Complexity, configurations and cases, *Theory, Culture & Society* 22(5), 95-111. doi: 10.1177/0263276405057194
- Christensen, C.M & Shu, K. (1999). What is an organization's culture? *Harvard Business School Background Note*, 399-104, February 1999. (Revised August 2006).
- Cook, S. & Yanow, D. (1993). Culture and organizational learning, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 2, 373-390.
- Daskalaki, M. (2012) Recontextualizing new employee induction: Organizational entry as a change space. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 48(1), 93-114. doi: 10.1177/0021886310395899
- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2011). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th Ed. (pp. 1-25). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dewey, J. & Bentley, A.F. (1949). *Knowing and the Known*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Elias, N. (1991). *The Society of Individuals*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Elias, N. & Scotson, J.L. (1994). *The Established and the Outsiders*. London: Sage.
- Ellingson, L.L. (2011). Analysis and representation across the continuum. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th Ed. (pp. 595-610). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ellström, P.-E. (2010). Practice-based innovation: A learning perspective, *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 22(1/2), 27-40. doi: 10.1108/13665621011012834
- Flaherty, M.G., Denzin, N.K., Manning, P.K. & Snow, D.A. (2002). Review symposium: Crisis in Representation, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 31(4), 478-516. doi: 10.1177/0891241602031004004
- Flaherty, M., & Fine, G.A. (2001). Present, past, and future: Conjugating George Herbert Mead's perspective on time, *Time & Society*, 10(2/3), 147-161.
- Fenwick. T., Edwards, R., & Sawchuk, P. (2011). *Emerging Approaches to Educational Research. Tracing the Sociomaterial*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.

- Feldman, D.C. (2012). The impact of socializing newcomers on insiders. In C.R. Wanberg (Ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 215-229). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Gallagher, E.B. & Sias, P.M. (2009): The new employee as a source of uncertainty: Veteran employee information seeking about new hires, *Western Journal of Communication*, 73(1), 23-46. doi: 10.1080/10570310802636326
- Griffin, D. (2002). *The emergence of leadership. Linking self-organization and ethics*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Hansen, T. & Levine, J.M. (2009). Newcomers as change agents: Effects of newcomers' behavioral style and teams' performance optimism. *Social Influence*, 4(1), 46-61. Doi: 10.1080/15534510802280827
- Hanson, N.R. (1958). *Patterns of Discovery: An Inquiry into the Conceptual Foundations of Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Helin, J., Hernes, T., Hjorth, D., & Holt, R. (2014). Process is how process does. In J. Helin, T. Hernes, D. Hjorth, & R. Holt (Eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Process Philosophy and Organization Studies* (pp. 1-16). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Høyrup, S. (2010). Employee-driven innovation and workplace learning: Basic concepts, approaches and themes. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 16, 143-154. doi: 10.1177/1024258910364102
- Jablin, F.M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F.M. Jablin & L.L. Putnam (Eds), *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication: Advances in Theory, Research and Methods* (pp. 732-818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Joas, H. (1996). *The Creativity of Action*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. (Edition from 2005).
- Jones, G.R. (1986). Socialization tactics, self-efficacy, and newcomers' adjustments to organizations, *Academy of Management Journal*, 29, 262-279.
- Kramer, M.W. (2010). *Organizational Socialization: Joining and Leaving Organizations*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interview: Introduktion til et håndværk*, 2. Udg. Kbh., DK: Hans Reitzel.

- Lapadat, J. & Lindsay, A. (1999). Transcription in research and practice: From standardization of technique to interpretive positionings, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 5, 64-86.
- Levine, J.M. & Moreland, R.L. (1985). Innovation and socialization in small groups. In S. Moscovici, G. Mugny, & E. Van Avermaet (Eds), *Perspectives on Minority Influence* (pp. 143–169). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Levine, J.M., Choi, H.-S., & Moreland, R.L. (2003). Newcomer innovation in work teams. In P.B. Paulus & B.A. Nijstad (Eds), *Group Creativity: Innovation through Collaboration* (pp. 202-224). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Levine, J.M., Moreland, R.L., & Choi, H.-S. (2001). Group socialization and newcomer innovation. In M.A. Hogg & R.S. Tindale (Eds), *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Group Process* (pp. 86-106). Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.
- Lewin, K. (1947). Frontiers in Group Dynamics: Concept, Method and Reality in Science; Social Equilibria and Social Change, *Human Relations*, 1(1), 5-40.
- Louis, M.R., Posner, B.Z., & Powell, G.N. (1983). The availability and helpfulness of socialization practices, *Personnel Psychology*, 36, 857-866.
- Mead, G.H. (1932). *The Philosophy of the Present* (this edition 2002). Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books. (Originally published: Chicago: Open Court Pub).
- Mead, G.H. (1934). *Mind, Self, and Society. From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. C.W. Morris (Ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Moreland, R.L., Levine J.M., & McMin, J.G. (2001). Self-categorization and work-group socialization. In M.A. Hogg & D.J. Terry (Eds), *Social Identity Processes in Organizational Contexts* (pp. 87-100). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group, Psychology Press.
- Mowles, C. (2010). Post-foundational development management – power, politics and complexity, *Public Administration and Development*, 30(2), 149-158. doi: 10.1080/09614524.2010.508110
- Mowles, C. (2011). *Rethinking Management. Radical Insights from the Complexity Sciences*. Surrey, UK: Gower Publishing.

- Mowles, C (2014). Complex, but not quite complex enough: The turn to the complexity sciences in evaluation scholarship, *Evaluation*, 20(2), 160-175. doi: 10.1177/1356389014527885
- Mowles, C. (2015). *Managing in Uncertainty. Complexity and the Paradoxes of Everyday Organizational Life*. Oxon, UK: Routledge
- Pierce, C.S. (1978). Pragmatism and abduction. In C. Hartshorne & P. Weiss (Eds), *Collected Papers vol. V* (pp. 180-212). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Prigogine, I. (1997). *The End of Certainty: Time, Chaos, and the New Laws of Nature*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Reichers, A.E. (1987). An interactionist perspective on newcomer socialization rates, *Academy of Management Review*, 12(2), 278-287.
- Revsbaek, L. (2011). Employee induction: A contribution to organizational innovation, translation of Revsbæk (2011), in *Adjusting to the Emergent. A process theory perspective on organizational socialization and newcomer innovation*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Aalborg University.
- Revsbaek, L. (2013a). *Researching organizational entry from a perspective of newcomer innovation*, conference paper, the annual DGfE conference, Commission of Organizational Education, Marburg, Germany, 2013.
- Revsbaek, L. (2013b). The Ecology of Entry, translation of Revsbæk (2013), in *Adjusting to the Emergent. A process theory perspective on organizational socialization and newcomer innovation*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Aalborg University.
- Revsbaek, L. & Tanggaard, L. (2014). Analyzing in the Present. *Qualitative Inquiry*, forthcoming.
- Revsbæk, L (2011). Medarbejderintroduktion – Et bidrag til organisatorisk innovation. I N. Stegeager & E. Laursen (Eds), *Organisationer i bevægelse, Læring- Udvikling – Intervention* (pp. 167-182). Kbh., DK: Samfundslitteratur.
- Revsbæk, L. (2013). Modtagelsessamspillet lokale økologi. *Akademisk Kvarter*, 6(6), 175-186.
- Rollag, K., Parise, S., & Cross, R. (2004). Getting new hires up to speed quickly, *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 46(2), 35-41.

- Saks, A.M. & Gruman, J.A. (2012). Getting Newcomers On Board: A Review of Socialization Practices and Introduction to Socialization Resources Theory. In C.R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 27-55). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Simpson, B. (2014). George Herbert Mead (1863-1931). In J. Helin, T. Hernes, D. Hjorth, & R. Holt (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Process Philosophy and Organization Studies* (pp. 272-286). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Sprogøe, J. & Elkjaer, B. (2010). Induction – organizational renewal and the maintenance of status quo, *Society and Business Review*, 5(2), 130-143. Doi: 10.1108/17465681011055550
- Sprogøe, J. (2008). Induction? Because first impressions last. A learning theoretical comparison of induction at a bank and a management consulting company. *Unpublished doctoral thesis*. Department of Learning, School of Education, Aarhus University, December 2008.
- St. Pierre, E.A. (1997). Methodology in the fold and the irruption of transgressive data, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10(2), 175-189. doi: 10.1080/095183997237278
- St. Pierre, E.A. (2011). Post qualitative research: The critique and the coming after. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th ed. (pp. 611-625). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- St. Pierre, E.A. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis after coding*, conference paper, annual meeting of the Seventh International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, University of Illinois.
- Stacey, R.D. (2010). *Complexity and Organizational Reality. Uncertainty and the Need to Rethink Management after the Collapse of Investment Capitalism*, 2nd Ed. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Stacey, R.D. (2011). *Strategic Management and Organizational Dynamics. The Challenge of Complexity*, 6th Ed. Essex, UK: Financial Times Prentice Hall.
- Stacey, R. (2012). *Tools and Techniques of Leadership and Management. Meeting the Challenge of Complexity*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Stroeback, P.S. & Willert, S. (2014). Meeting Generalized Others: Social Structure and Materiality in a Recently Merged Organization. In K.M. Jorgensen & C. Largacha-Martinez (Eds.), *Critical Narrative Inquiry – Storytelling, Sustainability and Power* (pp. 105-124). New York, NY: Nova Publishers.

- Tanggaard, L. (2013). Troubling methods in qualitative inquiry and beyond, *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 9(3), 1-99. doi: 10.5964/ejop.v9i3.647
- Tuttle, M. (2002). A review and a critique of Van Maanen and Schein's "Toward a theory of organizational socialization" and implications for human resource development, *Human Resource Development Review*, 1(1), 66-90. doi: 10.1177/1534484302011004
- Van Krieken, R. (2009). Norbert Elias and Process Sociology. In G. Ritzer & B. Smart (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Theory* (pp. 353-367). London: Sage.
- Van Maanen, J. (1978). People Processing: Strategies of Organizational Socialization, *Organizational Dynamics*, 7(1), 19-36.
- Van Maanen, J. (2011). *Tales of the Field. On Writing Ethnography*, 2nd Ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Van Maanen, J. & Schein, E.H. (1979). Toward a theory of organizational socialization. In B.M. Staw (Ed.), *Research in Organizational Behavior*, (vol.1, pp. 209-264). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Wanberg, C. (2012). Facilitating Organizational Socialization: An Introduction. In C. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 17-21). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Willert, S. (2010): Action Learning Consulting i videnskabs- og kompleksitetsteoretisk belysning. In T. Molly-Søholm & S. Willert (Eds), *Action Learning Consulting. Strategisk process konsultation i teori og praksis*.

PUBLISHED PAPERS

A. Employee induction: A contribution to organizational innovation (Revsbæk, 2011 – book chapter)

Original title:

Medarbejdermodtagelse – Et bidrag til organisatorisk innovation

English title:

Employee induction: A contribution to organizational innovation

First published (in Danish): Spring 2011

To cite the Danish paper:

Revsbæk, L. (2011). Medarbejderintroduktion – Et bidrag til organisatorisk innovation. I: Stegeager, N. & Laursen, E. *Organisationer i bevægelse, Læring – Udvikling – Intervention*. DK: Samfundslitteratur.

Employee induction

- A contribution to organizational innovation⁸

Line Revsbaek

The notion of *employee induction* is often used as an overall term describing the efforts of managers, colleagues, and induction specialists on behalf of an employing organization to assist newcomers in taking up work in the organization. As the terminology reflects, many induction efforts are based on the assumption that newcomers need help and assistance in getting into the organization and must be taught its existing culture and work procedures. Many organizations will recognize a tendency to approach newcomers as *subjects in need of learning*. Conversations between newcomers and veterans tend to be descriptive tales told by veterans, who are less curious about and attentive to newcomers' stories, approaches, and experiences. When veterans in conversations with new colleagues are attentive to these newcomers' experience, it is often to facilitate the learning and socialization of the new colleagues and only rarely with the aim of educating themselves in the encounter. Even more rarely are conversations between newcomers and veterans systematically staged as inspirational dialogues to spark and further reflexivity in veteran employees and managers. This chapter of the anthology explores the possibilities of viewing employee induction and mutual-learning dialogues between organizational newcomers and veterans as a potential for organizational innovation.

A significant cause of (spontaneous as well as intentional) change in organizations is the continuous recruitment of new, and departure of old, employees and managers. Related to the overall aim of this anthology on "organizations moving," concerned with organizational learning and innovation, this chapter focuses on how the movement of people into an organization, by taking up employment there, may contribute to its general innovation.

The chapter portrays innovation as being related to the employment of new organizational members in two ways. First, innovation is an inherent part of any socialization of newcomers, and second, a potential for innovation is possibly

⁸ Revsbaek (2011) "Employee induction: A contribution to organizational innovation" is a translation of Revsbæk, "Medarbejderintroduktion – Et bidrag til organisatorisk innovation," a chapter in the published anthology Stegeager, N., & Laursen, E. (Eds.), (2011), *Organisationer i bevægelse, Læring – Udvikling – Intervention*. DK, Kbh.: Samfundslitteratur.

realized and facilitated by certain ways of conducting and approaching employee induction. “Organizational innovation” related to the entry of new members is, for the present purpose, understood not as product innovation but as process innovation – that is, innovation in work procedures, culture, and ways of organizing (Bessant, 2003; Ellström, 2010; Levine et al., 2001; 2003). The criteria for identifying such innovation related to organizational entry processes are the novelty of any initiative compared to existing practice and the actual enactment of changes in practice (Ellström, 2010; Levine et al., 2001; 2003).

The chapter seeks to relate organizational *efforts to conduct employee induction* with organizational *efforts to innovate*. The chapter starts out describing a change in discourse on organizational newcomers in the research literature on organizational socialization. This analysis serves as an inspiration for describing different ways of approaching employee induction in organizations. Throughout the chapter, the newcomer is portrayed as a potential change agent for the employing organization. The innovation potential in organizational entry is illustrated by elaborating on the conceptual pair of newcomer *assimilation* versus organizational *accommodation* (Levine et al., 2001; 2003) and practice-based innovation (Ellström, 2010).

Changes in the discourse on organizational newcomers

There has been a general change in the discourse on organizational newcomers in research-based literature on organizational socialization. This change can be described in three steps:



1. Understanding *newcomers as objects of organizational socialization strategies* (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979)
2. Understanding *newcomers as proactive, self-socializing actors* (Ashforth et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 1998; Crant, 2000)
3. Recently, conceptualizing and understanding *newcomers as change agents* in the employing organization and work team (Hansen & Levine, 2008; Levine et al., 2001; 2003; see also Daskalaki, 2012; Sprogøe & Elkjaer, 2010)

1) *Newcomers as objects of organizational socialization strategies*

Early *socialization tactical perspectives* treated the newcomer as a relatively passive receiver of organizational socialization efforts and information (Ashforth et al., 2007). Traditionally, veteran coworkers and managers expect newcomers to be insecure and, to some degree, anxious, hesitant, and custodial in their behavior (Moreland & Levine, 1989). The motivation and behavior of newcomers during the period of entry is primarily understood in such perspectives in terms of a newcomer’s need to reduce anxiety (Kramer, 2010). Socialization tactical perspectives seek to explore the organizational influence on newcomers and the effect of specific socialization tactics on their behavior.

Organizational researchers John Van Maanen and Edgar Schein founded the research field of organizational socialization in 1979 with their seminal paper “Toward a theory of organizational socialization.” This paper established awareness of how different structural approaches to socializing newcomers could lead to their different role responses. The argument in Van Maanen and Schein’s work was that the character of the employee induction initiatives conditioned whether newcomers would respond to their role and job function in accordance with organizational expectations (“custodial role response”) or whether they would take up working in ways departing from organizational expectations, changing the role content or even the aim and mission of the work role (“innovative role response”) (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Table 1 presents Van Maanen and Schein’s categorization of organizational socialization strategies evoking either custodial or innovative role responses from newcomers.

Table 1. *Organizational socialization strategies.* (Sources: Tuttle, 2002; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979.)

Institutionalized socialization		Individualized socialization	
			
Evoking <i>custodial role responses</i> from newcomers		Evoking <i>innovative role responses</i> from newcomers	
Collective	A group of newcomers share socialization experiences (e.g., in induction seminars).	Socialization experiences are individual; newcomers are not grouped together.	Individual
Formal	Newcomers are isolated from veterans for a period of time.	Newcomers’ primary interactions are with organizational veterans.	Informal
Sequential	The learning process is sequenced.	Learning is not chronologically linear.	Ad hoc
Fixed	Learning steps are scheduled.	There is no fixed period of socialization and learning.	Variable
Serial	Role models, mentorship, and more experienced coworkers in similar job functions are available.	Newcomers work autonomously with no available role models.	Disjunctive
Divestiture	The socialization dissolves previous work-related identities of newcomers to build up new ones.	The socialization supports and integrates previous work-related identities of newcomers.	Investiture

Van Maanen and Schein did not explore the possible innovative effects on *veteran* members' work and practice of having organizational newcomers enter the organization.

2) *Newcomers as proactive, self-socializing actors*

Later studies of newcomer entry and organizational socialization pointed out newcomers' proactive information-seeking behavior and their observations of veteran coworkers' practice for the purpose of decoding organizational norms and values (Ashford & Black, 1996; Morrison, 1993). Theoretical assumptions concerning newcomers thus shifted from considering them as *passive recipients of organizational socialization* to *proactive self-socializing actors*. The changed assumptions brought about studies focusing explicitly on newcomer proactive behavior.

3) *Newcomers as change agents*

Studies on newcomer proactive self-socializing behavior reported *unintended innovation effects* of this behavior (Ashforth et al., 2007; Crant, 2000). The proactive behavior that newcomers exhibit includes, for example, the questions they pose to veteran coworkers and managers concerning organizational arrangements and approaches in the work. Dialogues between newcomers and hiring managers to clarify work roles and work assignments may affect the assignments and job functions of veteran coworkers and the work procedures engaging both newcomers and veterans. Another example is the establishment of trust and strong collaborative relationships between newcomers and veteran organizational members in key organizational positions (for example, the hiring manager), which may affect and change the trust and degree of confidentiality that other organizational members share with these key persons (Ashford & Black, 1996; Ashforth et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 1998).

Social psychologists Richard L. Moreland and John M. Levine conducted small-group research in experimental studies of autonomous ad hoc work groups among university students in the United States. They employed in their studies a distinction between *unintended innovation effects* (as described above) and *intended innovation effects* of a newcomer's entry into a work group in which the newcomer attempts to introduce some change or initiative into the group activity (Levine et al., 2001; 2003). Levine and his colleagues understood the newcomer attempting these changes as being motivated to create a better fit between the team and the newcomer's needs. Newcomers might *intend* to generate innovation in the team owing to their beliefs in or experience with a different approach to the perceived problem or work assignment or owing to a perceived incompatibility between their

own values, ideals, and preconceptions (e.g., professional principles) and those of the team or work collective.

Levine and his colleagues' research on the intended innovation effects following a newcomer's entry, in combination with research on proactive newcomer behavior bringing about unintended innovation effects, has contributed to the framing of organizational newcomers as potential change agents in the employing work team or organization (for newcomers as change agents, see also Hansen & Levine, 2008). Levine and his colleagues labeled the innovation effects of newcomer's entry *newcomer innovation*. The notion of newcomer innovation is used in the following sections in relation to both intended and unintended innovation effects of the interaction between newcomers and veterans in organizational entry processes.

I suggests the three steps thus described as changes in the discourse on organizational newcomers may inform three different ways in which to approach newcomers in today's employee induction practice. Three such different approaches are *instructing* employee induction, *dialogical* employee induction, and *innovation-generating* employee induction. These approaches are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. *Employee induction paradigms.*

Employee Induction	Instructing	Dialogical	Innovation-generating
Assumption about the organizational newcomer	Object of organizational influence and socialization strategies	Proactive, self-socializing actor	Change agent in the organization
Organizational attitude toward newcomer in induction practices	Educative, narrating, informing	Facilitating newcomer learning reflections	Inquiring, self-reflexive
Subject of learning	Newcomer	Newcomer – perhaps veterans (unintended)	Newcomer <i>and</i> veterans (intended)

I propose to differentiate between three types of employee induction. In instructing and dialogical employee induction, the organizational newcomer is the only or primary learning subject, respectively. The difference is that dialogical employee induction includes the kind of proactive and self-socializing behavior of newcomers bringing about unintended innovation effects, as described earlier. In dialogical employee induction designs, which facilitate the learning reflection of newcomers,

veteran socialization agents may become secondary learning subjects. The most significant difference in approaches to employee induction is between dialogical employee induction and innovation-generating employee induction, the latter of which considers veteran members as primary learning subjects alongside newcomers.

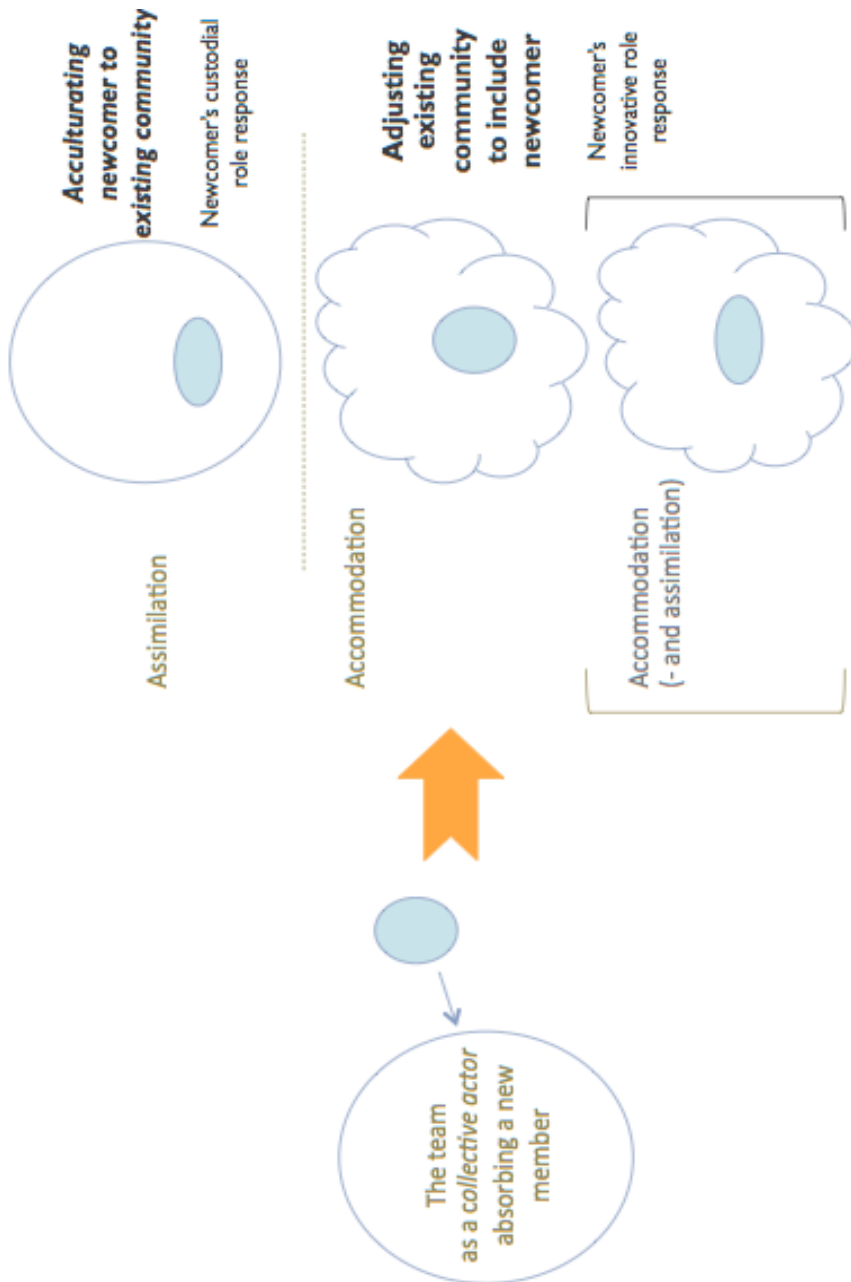
The concept of newcomer innovation stemming from experimental studies of socialization in work groups constitutes an explicit focus on newcomers' influence on organizational veterans (Levine et al., 2001; 2003). The rest of the chapter explores newcomers as potential change agents in the employing organization. First is a presentation of the concept of newcomer innovation (Ibid.), followed by an introduction to practice-based considerations of employee-driven innovation (Ellström, 2010; Høyrup, 2010; Kesting & Ulhøi, 2010) possibly informing the understanding of newcomers as contributors to organizational change.

Newcomer innovation

The notion of newcomer innovation stems from research on socialization of newcomers in small work groups. This small-group research originally emphasized the receptiveness of newcomers to the influence of veteran group members (Levine & Moreland, 1991; 1999). Apparently, newcomers face a larger degree of resistance from other team members when suggesting changes or giving critiques of previous group performance, group culture, or work procedures (Hornsey et al., 2007). As Levine and Hansen (2008) pointed out, newcomers tend not to behave in assertive ways to avoid negative responses from veteran team members. Levine and his colleagues explained the encounter between the newcomer and the employing work collective as a process of socialization versus innovation, described by a reference to the Piagetian concept pair of *assimilation* versus *accommodation* (Levine et al., 2001; 2003).

We know the concepts of assimilation and accommodation from Piaget's cognitive developmental psychology (Piaget, 1971). Assimilation is the process of integrating new impressions into already existing structures of meaning without changing the latter significantly. Accommodation is the process in which integrating new impressions that are sufficiently foreign to existing understanding evoke a change in the existing structures of meaning. That is, in assimilation, new impressions are adjusted to existing schemata whereas in accommodation, the schemata are changed to integrate the new impressions. Although Piaget introduced the conceptual pair to explain cognitive development in individuals, Levine and his colleagues used it to account for the process of a newcomer entering a group (Levine et al., 2001; 2003).

Figure 3. *Newcomer innovation illustrated by the conceptual figure of assimilation versus accommodation.* (The illustration is based on the description of newcomer innovation in Levine et al., 2001; 2003.)



In the case of a newcomer entering an existing work community (team or organization), assimilation is the process of the newcomer adjusting or socializing to fit existing ways of working and the organizational culture of the employing work community. Accommodation is the innovation of the team culture or work procedures brought about by the newcomer's entry into the team. The conceptual figure of assimilation versus accommodation illustrates the innovation potential in the encounter between new and veteran organizational members and shows the newcomer as a generator or originator of innovation. Figure 3 is a figurative illustration of assimilation versus accommodation.

In the theoretical figure of assimilation versus accommodation, it is made clear that old assumptions have to give way if new perspectives are to be implemented. Figure 3 on assimilation versus accommodation illustrates that the process of adjustment in the encounter between newcomer and veterans does not have to be one-sided. Organizational veterans may become subjects of learning when encountering new colleagues. The conceptual pair of assimilation versus accommodation allows us to consider the individual learning of the newcomer as linked to organizational learning in the work community. Accommodation of the work community and veteran members' learning may be possible effects of what is called innovation-generating employee induction initiatives. The assimilation of the newcomer is more exclusively the aim of instructing and dialogical employee induction designs (see Table 2).

I suggest therefore, the organizational newcomer is possibly understood as an organizational change agent. The next step is to further explore *how* newcomers contribute to organizational innovation due to their newcomer perspective. To thus explore the interplay between organizational newcomers and veterans as a bi-directional, innovation-generating exchange, these considerations about newcomer innovation from small-group research are discussed in the following section in relation to the recent paradigm of *employee-driven innovation* (Høyrup, 2010; Kesting & Ulhøi, 2010) and practice-based innovation in organizations (Ellström, 2010).

Newcomer as actor in employee-driven innovation

A case study on organizational entry and employee induction in a large production company in Denmark (a PhD project at Aalborg University, Denmark) explored the entry process of six newcomers and their collaboration with veteran coworkers and hiring managers. The six newcomers participating in the study emphasize the need for their early and direct involvement in the production and practice of the

employing organization (Revsbaek, 2014).⁹ In the literature on employee-driven innovation (MDI), the innovation brought about by employees is perceived to originate from the engagement of competent employees in organizational practice (Høyrup, 2010; Kesting & Ulhøi, 2010). The engagement of employees in everyday practice – that is, the process of production and the business processes in the organization – is central to both employee-driven innovation and considerations of innovation-generating employee induction.

As an innovation paradigm, employee-driven innovation distinguishes itself by considering the work-related experiences, skills, and knowledge of *all* employees as a primary source of innovation in organizations owing to employees' practice-based knowledge of services, products, processes, procedures, coworkers' skills, suppliers' interests, and customers' needs and desires (Kesting & Ulhøi, 2010). The paradigm of employee-driven innovation emphasizes the employee engaged in the everyday organizational practice as the key innovation actor. Literature on MDI usually does not make a distinction between organizational veterans and newcomers.

Referring to a theoretical model of practice-based innovation in organizations (Ellström, 2010), the following section explores the potentially innovation-generating interplay between newcomers and veterans. The section concludes in a typology of innovation-facilitating newcomer behavior.

Per-Erik Ellström, Swedish professor of workplace learning, has described a model of practice-based innovation in organizations drawing on individual and organizational learning theories and research (2010). Ellström has not characterized his practice-based innovation model as an employee-driven innovation model, but his model is used in this chapter to illustrate the knowledge processes related to the assumption inherent in employee-driven innovation accounts of employees as a special category of innovation actors due to their close involvement in diverse aspects of the everyday organizational practice.

Ellström has described practice-based innovation as a continuous exchange between the *reproduction* of formalized and codified work procedures in enacted practice and the *transformation* of procedures inspired by variation in practice (see Figure 4). Drawing on Argyris and Schön's concepts of "espoused theories" and "theories-in-use" concerning that which we say we do versus that which we actually do (Argyris & Schön, 1996), Ellström distinguished between an *explicit* and *implicit* dimension of the organizational production process. The explicit dimension of the production process is the codified and formalized knowledge of the organization found in job

⁹ The case study was conducted in a case organization using standardized employee induction programs facilitated by trainers from the company HR department. In connection to six newcomer entry processes in the organization, 34 interviews across two rounds of interviews were conducted inquiring into the experience of newcomers, veteran coworkers, and hiring managers during the period of entry.

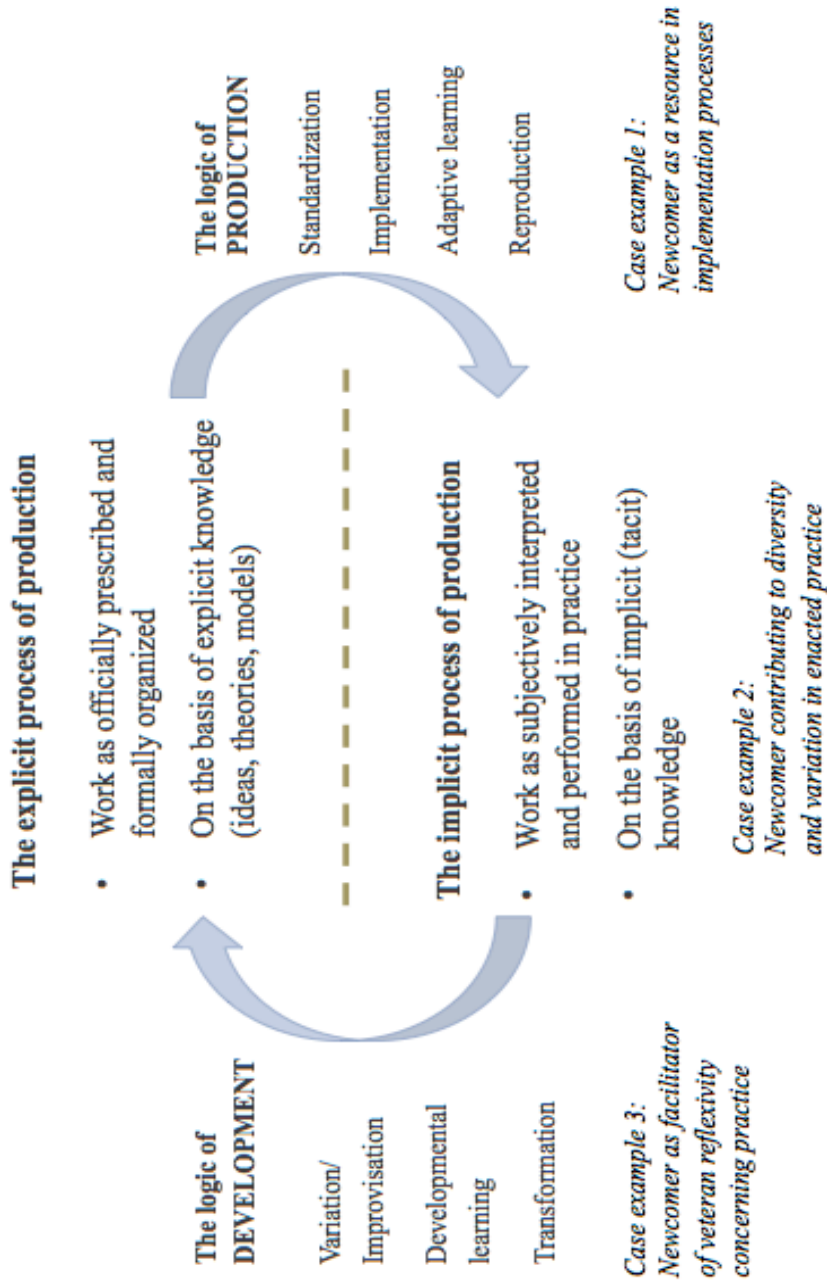
descriptions, best-practice instructions, descriptions of work procedures, standards, and the formal structures of the organization. The implicit dimension of the production process refers to the work and practice as it is actually enacted on the basis of individual employees' interpretations of procedures and job descriptions in their practice (Ellström, 2010). A theoretical assumption in Ellström's concept of practice-based innovation is the assumption of practice as enacted by individual employees on the basis of their tacit knowledge and subjective interpretations of formal standards in the organization. The diversity and variation in the actual practice of organizational employees far exceeds that in the codified prescriptions and value statements of the explicit knowledge base of the organization (for illustration see Figure 4).

The process of reproduction, or the *logic of production*, as Ellström labeled one of two practice-based innovation dynamics in his model, plays out when variation and contingencies in organizational practice are sought to be reduced, unified, or routinized by implementing organizational standards to make the practice more aligned and to free organizational resources. The process of transformation, labeled the *logic of development*, is activated when old instructions and procedures, including the perception of work assignments embedded in procedures, turn out to be insufficient for guiding present organizational practices. At this point, improvisation of new practices over time (in the implicit dimension) comprises the basis for formulating new prescriptions and understandings (in the explicit dimension). The logic of production focuses on *reducing variation* in practice by implementing formalized procedures. The logic of development focuses on *exploring variation* in practice with the aim of making new standards and formalizing the organizational practice (Ellström, 2010).

Drawing on this practice-based innovation model of Ellström, the potential innovation contributions of organizational newcomers can be understood as related to three aspects of the practice-based innovation process:

- Concerning the logic of production: *Newcomer as a resource of implementation in the organization* (case example 1)
- Concerning the implicit production process: *Newcomer as contributor to diversity and variation in enacted practice in the organization* (case example 2)
- Concerning the logic of development: *Newcomer as facilitator of veteran reflexivity concerning practice* (case example 3)

Figure 4. *Practice-based innovation*. (Source: Based on Ellström, 2010. Examples 1, 2, and 3 are case examples from a case study on organizational entry and employee induction at Aalborg University, Denmark, Revsbaek, 2014)



In the following section, I present case examples of newcomer contribution from each of these three perspectives of practice-based innovation drawn from a case study on organizational entry and employee induction in a large production company in Denmark (Revsbaek, 2014).

Case example 1: Newcomer as a resource in implementation processes

A newcomer (X3) shares with a veteran coworker the instructions and descriptions of procedures that he has discovered as part of his own assimilation into the organizational practice. He contributes to a broader process of reproduction (as understood in the practice-based innovation model, Ellström, 2010) of the formalized and codified knowledge base of the employing organization. A veteran coworker (X3) describes the newcomer as exploring the company intranet and from this, to return to their shared work, introducing to the veteran organizational knowledge that was previously unknown to the veteran.¹⁰

Veteran coworker (X3):

“He [the newcomer] uses our intranet a lot for searching out information – then he comes across this particular template. I guess almost all company presentations are available on the intranet. I was surprised this information existed. So in that way, he is contributing. He is searching out and taking in what is available of things that he and I can then steal and use for our assignment. In this way, he is passing on what he found on the intranet as an inspiration [for solving the shared work assignment].... The rest of us [organizational veterans in the department] are preoccupied, with our hands in the soil, so to speak ... and then all of a sudden, there are a lot of things that we as veterans don’t spend time searching out in daily doings because, well, we are not new to the organization.”

In Ellström’s terminology, this newcomer is contributing to the innovation dynamic of organizational reproduction and implementation with his information-seeking behavior and his work-related collaboration with a veteran coworker during the period of entry. The newcomer thus becomes a resource implementing formalized best practices in organizational practice.

¹⁰ The following statement of a case study veteran coworker is also quoted in Revsbaek (2014).

Case example 2: Newcomer contributing to diversity and variation in enacted practice

Drawing on previous work experience, which is necessarily different from that of veterans, the newcomer will contribute to the general diversity and variation in enacted organizational practice when taking up work in the organization.

A hiring manager (X3) in the case study witnesses his newcomer employee handle a project meeting with a representative from another department. Pleased with the newcomer's approach to handling the meeting, he encourages veteran department coworkers to familiarize themselves with the project presentation of the newcomer, holding it as exemplary of the kind of collaboration with project stakeholders envisioned of future department practice.

Hiring manager (X3):

“Generally I let my employees know if they do their work well, but in relation to Niels [the newcomer], I know I did one thing in particular. Niels and I had a first meeting with a colleague from another department concerning a shared project. The way Niels presented the project plan, making it clear and simple, what needs to be done and when it should be done, was really good. So I told the others [the department veterans] to check out Niels's presentation, to ask him how he approached it, because it was really good. So in that particular case, I have exerted my influence and suggested they talk to each other about it.”

This newcomer (X3) was given areas of responsibility and assigned specific tasks from the first days of his employment. He had relevant work experience as a project manager from his previous workplace, which made it possible for him to manifest in practice a particular way of doing project management. A necessary condition if newcomers' enacted practice is ever to become an inspiration to organizational veterans is that organizational veterans witness them working, enacting practice, and convey inspiration to other veterans or take notice of it in their own practice. Being inspired by a new colleague requires witnessing the new colleague in action. Employee induction practices such as providing the newcomer a coworker “buddy” or a mentor usually enable the newcomer to witness the practice of veteran coworkers. By contrast, innovation-generating employee induction designs (see Figure 2) emphasize the opportunity for organizational veterans to witness newcomers enacting practice to inspire the development of their own practice.

Case example 3: Newcomer as facilitator of veteran reflexivity

In case study interviews, organizational newcomers, veteran coworkers, and hiring managers presented stories of newcomers contributing to veteran reflexivity concerning the veterans' own practice. Below is a case example of a hiring manager describing a question posed by a department newcomer concerning the use of two types of IT protocols by different project managers for similar purposes in the department practice. The question posed by newcomer makes veteran coworkers consider the work procedures in question.

Hiring manager (X2):

When we are in our department meetings, like we were last Thursday, I hear Birgitte [the newcomer assistant] already challenging them [the veteran project managers in the department] with regard to some of the ways that we do the work.... To give an example, we have two different IT protocols and use one of them in some situations and the other in other situations concerning other things. Birgitte made it clear that she didn't see the need for the two protocols; why not just use the one protocol to cover it all? They [the veteran project managers] of course had their arguments as to why there are two protocols and not just one, but just the fact that Birgitte challenges them on this makes me think there will be more of that in time to come. (...) I am right next to Birgitte when she challenges them by posing such questions."

Organizational newcomers are made aware of their own implicit and tacit knowledge when they move from one organizational context to another and change their portfolio of work assignments (Fenwick, 2003). The above case example (3) illustrates how newcomers, in their efforts to understand the work and practice in the new organizational context, also become aware of the incongruence between the implicit and explicit dimensions of the process of production in their new workplace. They are thus particularly positioned to articulate the need for revising explicit prescriptions in the organization if these are out of sync with actual practice.

Drawing on the considerations of organizational employees as a resource in innovation as described in the paradigm of employee-driven innovation (Høyrup, 2010; Kesting & Ulhøi, 2010) and the practice-based innovation model (Ellström, 2010), organizational newcomers appear to be potential actors of innovation in two ways:

1. As direct generators of ideas and initiatives
2. As facilitators of veteran coworkers' and managers' reflexivity and change of practice

Table 5 is a typology of innovation-generating behavior by newcomers. The typology is meant to increase awareness among organizational practitioners (newcomers, veteran coworkers, and hiring managers) of the potential innovation contributions of newcomer behavior during the period of entry. Whether these behaviors will actually lead to small- or large-scale organizational innovation depends on the curiosity and receptiveness toward these behaviors and what they imply on behalf of managers and veteran coworkers in the organization.

Table 5. *Typology of innovation-generating newcomer behavior.*

Innovation-generating newcomer behavior	Prototypical articulations	Newcomer is taking the position of the...
Asking	"How are things done around here?"	Journalistic researcher (Case example 1)
Mirroring/feedback	"I noticed that.... Why do you think that is?" "Why are you going about it in that way?"	Anthropologist (Case example 3)
Consulting	"Where I come from, we used to..." "Perhaps it could also be done in this way."	Critical discussion partner
Enacting	"My way of doing it is to...."	Experienced practitioner (Case example 2)

The innovation-generating newcomer behavior is varied. At one end of the continuum, we find unintended innovation effects of newcomer's proactive self-socializing behavior (e.g., *asking* and *mirroring/feedback*). At the other end of the continuum are intended innovation suggestions and direct inspiration with regard to both the explicit and implicit dimension of the production process (e.g., *consulting* and *enacting*). We know from small-group research on newcomer innovation that the actual innovation effect of such newcomer behavior depends on the general receptiveness to novelty and innovation in the work community culture, the newcomer's ability to convince veterans, the timing of the newcomer's innovative suggestions relative to the trust built up between the newcomer and veterans, and the number of newcomers relative to the number of veterans in the work community (Levine et al., 2001; 2003).

Conclusions on employee induction and organizational innovation

In much of the formalized employee induction currently practiced in organizations, we risk making “teaching” and “education” the most prominent metaphors for how to receive a newcomer into the workplace (see also Revbaek, 2014). The reality in most organizations and job functions is that newcomers do need to be trained and educated with regard to some skills and knowledge in order to work in the organization and do their job function. These aspects of the work include, for example, IT templates, databases, and safety and security procedures. With regard to the organizational efforts on employee induction, the argument posed here is that we as practitioners in organizational life should make the situated assessment of whether to actually educate and train our newcomer employees or when and in what ways we might regard their induction process as a process for co-creating and innovating the work community.

The change of discourse concerning organizational newcomers in the research literature described in this chapter has inspired a consideration of veterans as potential subjects of learning akin to newcomers in employee induction designs. The chapter has portrayed newcomers and veterans as mutually learning subjects and potential actors of organizational innovation. It has been pointed out concerning newcomers as organizational change agents that newcomers either act as *direct generators of ideas and initiatives* or as *facilitators* of veteran reflexivity.

The chapter has briefly mentioned the importance of early involvement of newcomers in the process of production for the purpose of employee induction. The presented considerations about practice-based innovation (Ellström, 2010) and employee-driven innovation (Høyrup, 2010) further signify their close involvement in practice/production and collaborations. If employee induction is to become innovation-generating, newcomers necessarily have to be involved in the organizational production process early in their employment.

To consider early newcomer involvement in the process of production and collaborations as an employee induction concern revitalizes employee induction as a management assignment rather than as typically an HR assignment “outsourced” to company HR divisions. These divisions can be primary induction agents when employee induction is a matter of educational seminars, as in instructing employee induction paradigms (see Figure 2). But if employee induction is to be an innovation-generating matter in the employing organization, it necessarily involves the hiring manager and veteran coworkers being active participants in the induction initiatives. For employee induction to be innovation generating, the dialogues between newcomers and veterans should be made in the presence of decision makers and not just representatives of HR divisions.

For HR divisions planning employee induction, to make them (also) innovation generating for the organization, HR facilitators should engage managers and

veterans as participants and subjects of learning related to the induction design. The HR facilitators need to think of themselves not only as tutors of newcomers but as facilitators of innovation. Taking the perspective on organizational entry processes that employee induction is also a matter of organizational innovation requires that hiring managers think of employee induction not as an assignment possibly “outsourced” to company HR but as a process of collaboration, discussion, and frequent interactions with newcomers and as related to the ongoing development and innovation of department and organizational practice.

References

- Argyris, C. & Schön, D.A. (1996). *Organizational learning II: Theory, method and practice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Ashford, S.J. & Black, J.S. (1996). Proactivity during organizational entry: The role of desire for control, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(2), 199-214.
- Ashforth, B.E., Sluss, D.M., & Saks, A.M. (2007). Socialization tactics, proactive behavior, and newcomer learning: Integrating socialization models, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 70, 447-462.
- Bauer, T.N., Morrison, E.W., & Callister, R.R. (1998). Organizational socialization: A review and directions for future research, *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 16, 149-214.
- Bessant, J. (2003). *High-involvement innovation. Building and sustaining competitive advantage through continuous change*. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons.
- Crant, M.J. (2000). Proactive behavior in organizations. *Journal of Management*, 26(3), 435-462.
- Ellström, P.-E. (2010). Practice-based innovation: A learning perspective. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 22(1-2), 27-40.
- Hansen, T. & Levine, J.M. (2008). Newcomers as change agents: Effects of newcomer’s behavioral style and team’s performance optimism, *Social Influence*, 4(1), 46-61.
- Fenwick, T. (2003). Innovation: Examining workplace learning in new enterprises, *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 15(3), 123-132.

- Hornsey, M.J., Grice, T., Jetten, J., Paulsen, N., & Callan, V. (2007). Group-directed criticisms and recommendations for change: Why newcomers arouse more resistance than old-timers, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33, 1036-1048.
- Høyrrup, S. (2010). Employee-driven innovation and workplace learning: Basic concepts, approaches and themes, *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 16, 143-154.
- Kesting, P., & Ulhøi, J.P. (2010). Employee-driven innovation: Extending the license to foster innovation, *Management Decision*, 48, 65-84.
- Kramer, M.W. (2010). *Organizational socialization: Joining and leaving organizations*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Levine, J.M., Choi, H.-S., & Moreland, R.L. (2003). Newcomer innovation in work teams. In P.B. Paulus & B.A. Nijstad (Eds.), *Group creativity: Innovation through collaboration* (pp. 202-224). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Levine, J.M., & Moreland, R.L. (1991). Culture and socialization in work groups. In L.B. Resnick, J.M. Levine, & S.D. Teasley (Eds.), *Perspectives on socially shared cognition* (pp. 257-279). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Levine, J.M., & Moreland, R.L. (1999). Knowledge transmission in work groups: Helping newcomers to succeed. In L.L. Thompson, J.M. Levine, & D.M. Messick (Eds.), *Shared cognition in organizations* (pp. 267-296). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Levine, J.M., Moreland, R.L. & Choi, H.-S. (2001). Group socialization and newcomer innovation. In M.A. Hogg & R.S. Tindale (Eds.), *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Group process*, pp. 86-106. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.
- Moreland, R.L., & Levine, J.M. (1989). Newcomers and oldtimers in small groups. In P. Paulus (Ed.), *Psychology of group influence* (2nd ed.) (pp. 143-186). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Morrison, E.W. (1993). Newcomer information seeking: Exploring types, modes, sources, and outcomes, *Academy of Management Journal*, 36, 557-589.
- Piaget, J. (1971). *The construction of reality in the child*. New York, NY: Ballantine.

- Revsbaek, L. (2014). *Adjusting to the emergent: A process theory perspective on organizational socialization and newcomer innovation*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Aalborg University.
- Tuttle, M. (2002). A review and a critique of Van Maanen and Schein's "Toward a theory of organizational socialization" and implications for human resource development, *Human Resource Development Review*, 1(1), 66-90.
- Van Maanen, J. & Schein, E.H. (1979). Toward a theory of organizational socialization. In B.M. Staw (Ed.), *Research in organizational behavior* (pp. 209-264). Greenwich, CT: JAI.

B. Researching organizational entry from a perspective of newcomer innovation (Revsbaek, 2013a - conference paper)

Original title:

Researching organizational entry from a perspective of newcomer innovation

Conference paper presented at the annual DGfE conference by the Commission of Organizational Education: Marburg, Germany, February 2013.

Conference theme: *Organization and the New*

The paper is accepted for publication in the conference proceedings: October 2013

To cite the paper:

Revsbaek, L. (2013a). *Researching organizational entry from a perspective of newcomer innovation*, conference paper, the annual DGfE conference, Commission of Organizational Education, Marburg, Germany, 2013.

Researching organizational entry from a perspective of newcomer innovation¹¹

Line Revsbaek

Keywords: organizational entry, organizational socialization, newcomers, veterans uncertainty, newcomer innovation, complex responsive processes, multi-perspective interview design, case study.

This paper outlines preliminary results from a doctoral case study¹² on organizational entry from an analytical perspective of newcomer innovation. Organizational entry processes were examined from a reciprocal perspective, that of newcomer, veteran coworker and hiring manager. All subjects interviewed for the study were actively employed in the support functions of a large private sector production company in Denmark. Analyzing the multi-perspective interview accounts of newcomer–veteran interactions, I view organizations as complex responsive processes (Stacey, 2010; 2011), and understand socialization in terms of establishing a workplace-related self and acquiring a sense of the attitude of the ‘generalized other’ (Mead, 1934) in the organization.

Introducing reciprocity in socialization research

A recent review on organizational socialization research sums up the general entry experience of organizational newcomers:

”They [organizational newcomers] are unsure of their role and how well they will perform their job. They are unaware of the appropriate and acceptable ways of behaving in the organization. In effect, they are like strangers in a strange land who must learn how to think, behave, and interact with other members of the organization if they are to become accepted and effective members themselves” (Saks & Gruman, 2012, p. 27, *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization*)

¹¹ Revsbaek (2013a) *Researching organizational entry from a perspective of newcomer innovation* is conference paper presented at the annual DGfE commission of Organizational Education Conference on the theme of *Organization and the New*, in Marburg, Germany, February 2013.

¹² Aalborg University, Denmark. The scholarship is co-financed by Aalborg University and Mercuri Urval A/S. The case organization is anonymous.

As in this quote by Saks and Gruman, a majority of research literature on organizational socialization distinctly locates the sense of insecurity and the need for learning with the organizational newcomer and significantly not with veterans who are more often referred to as ‘socialization agents’ (Feldman, 2012).

Van Maanen and Schein’s founding conceptual work on organizational socialization in their 1979 article interprets organizational socialization as “*the process by which one is taught and learns ‘the ropes’ of a particular organizational role*” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979:211). As such organizational socialization is coined as the learning process for the organizational newcomer and transitioning individual, and socialization practices are described as aimed at facilitating newcomer learning and adjustment.

“While much of the previous research on organizational socialization has focused on how managers and coworkers influence the entry of new entrants into the firm, surprisingly little attention has been given to how the socialization of new employees influences insiders” (Feldman, 2012:215).

Feldman thus argues that most socialization research literature tends one-sidedly to emphasize the influence *on* newcomers *from* coworkers and managers, while neglecting to consider the influence *from* newcomers *on* insiders. Feldman’s argument could be further expounded with the assertion that much research literature on organizational socialization is fundamentally oblivious to the *interdependency* between newcomers and veterans during entry processes. Past researchers’ lopsided focus on the newcomer experience, learning and adjustment, and their conceptualization of organizational socialization in terms of processes, strategies and practices centering exclusively on organizational newcomers, reveals that the reciprocal social nature of entry processes has been previously ignored or not brought into serious consideration. Consequently an argument can be made that to better understand organizational socialization in everyday work-related local interactions; one must view the process as a bi-directional experience.

In order for organizational entry to be understood as a reciprocal social phenomenon shared by newcomers and veterans alike, attention must be paid to the motivations, actions, and experiences of veteran coworkers and managers encountered by the newcomers during local organizational entry processes.

“... moving beyond investigating only transitioning individuals to also engaging in more careful study of the motivations and actions of those they encounter in their local context” (Ashford & Nurmohamed, 2012:16)

Gallagher and Sias recently did a study on veteran employees’ experiences of

uncertainty during organizational entry processes (2009) were they identified and categorized veteran uncertainty. They concluded that organizational newcomers are not just *experiencing* uncertainty during organizational entry (as already acknowledged in research on organizational entry, see for example Kramer, 2010), but also *creating* uncertainty for veteran employees. According to Gallagher and Sias (2009), irrespective of whether any ‘newcomer innovation’ is registered, veteran uncertainty is part of organizational entry “*because the veteran saw potential for the new employee to transform the work environment*” (Gallagher & Sias, 2009:31). In cases involving entry of new managers, veteran uncertainty relates also to job security (Ibid.). According to Gallagher and Sias their research linked various categories of experienced veteran uncertainty to the entry of newcomers. This “*broadens the notion of the organizational newcomer*” as well as “*the notion of the veteran employee*” (Ibid:38), thus highlighting “*the fact that new employee socialization is an organization-wide phenomenon, not simply an event that affects the newcomer*” (Ibid:38).

The case study presented in this paper is based on a multi-perspective interview design inquiring into work-related interactions during the period of newcomer entry as experienced by all subjects. The focus on the reciprocal nature of entry processes is furthered by the concept of ‘newcomer innovation’ developed by Levine and his colleagues in the context of their experimental studies on newcomer innovation in autonomous ad hoc work groups (Levine *et. al.*, 2001; 2003). Below is a brief presentation of the concept of ‘newcomer innovation’ followed by a description of how Levine and his colleague’s work was incorporated into the interview design process of the current case study.

The concept of newcomer innovation

Researchers of organizational socialization have long recognized newcomers as proactive participants in their own socialization process (Morrison, 1993; Kramer, 2010). Furthermore, studies of newcomer’s proactive information seeking behavior vis a vis veteran coworkers and managers have been demonstrated to carry unintended innovation effects in workplace and practice (Ashforth *et. al.*, 2007).

“... As critical as it is to understand when newcomers will become active participants in their own socialization process, it is equally critical to understand when insiders will embrace (or reject) the changes newcomers seek” (Feldman, 2012:220).

‘Newcomer innovation’ is a term coined by Levine and his colleagues researching entry of newcomers in autonomous, ad hoc work groups of university students in experimental research designs (Levine *et. al.*, 2001; 2003; Hansen & Levine, 2009). Their research is aimed at explaining the conditions under which newcomer innovation occurs. Drawing on Levine and Moreland’s work on innovation and socialization in small work groups (1985), Levine *et. al.* (2001) define the

‘innovation’ in newcomer innovation in broad terms as: “*any significant change in the structure, dynamics, or performance of a group*” (Ibid.:91). Innovation is seen as brought about in “*implicit or explicit negotiation between newcomers, who suggest new ways of performing team tasks, and oldtimers, who accept these suggestions*” (Levine *et. al.*, 2003:216). Levine and his colleagues describe encounters between newcomers and oldtimers in terms of reciprocal influence “*with both parties acting as sources as well as targets of influence*” (Levine *et. al.*, 2001:87).

Levine *et al.* (2001) distinguish between unintended and intended newcomer innovation and define intended newcomer innovation in terms of the newcomer ‘pushing’ the group to change in order for the group to fit the newcomer’s needs better – what has elsewhere been understood as ‘individualization’ (e.g. Kramer, 2010). Hence, the intention to innovate is considered ‘owned’ by newcomer. The occurrence of newcomer innovation is understood in terms of *accommodation* by group to newcomer suggestions as opposed to newcomer *assimilating* to group socialization (Levine *et. al.*, 2001).

Levine and his colleagues identify three determining factors of ‘newcomer innovation’ incidents. Newcomer innovation occurs:

- When the newcomer is *motivated* to suggest new ideas to the group: “*Innovation attempts are more likely when newcomers want to change the group and believe their efforts will succeed*” (Levine *et. al.*, 2001:96). If newcomer’s needs are not being met, the newcomer will be motivated to initiate change. In attempting innovation newcomer takes into account the anticipated group responses and the likelihood that the group will be receptive to newcomer’s suggestions.
- When the newcomer is *capable* of working out useful ideas perceived by veteran group members as possibly enhancing group performance or as otherwise serving group interests. The newcomer’s capability to innovate in this manner is enhanced if the newcomer has previous experience performing similar kinds of work (Ibid.).
- When the newcomer is *able to convince* veteran group members to adopt the new idea (Levine *et. al.*, 2003). Consistency in communication and perceived status among veteran members (Levine *et. al.*, 2001) are both assumed to be factors enhancing the newcomer’s potential for convincing group members.

It should be noted that the group performance events studied by Levine and his colleagues are without organizational context. Formalized leadership, most often

characterizing group performance in real life organizations, is also not taken into account in these experimental studies.

Project definition of ‘newcomer innovation’

As mentioned earlier, the case study approach to organizational entry processes is from an analytic perspective of ‘newcomer innovation’. The study inquires into incidents of ‘newcomer innovation’ as brought about in newcomer-veteran interactions during organizational entry. For this an operational definition of ‘newcomer innovation’ is defined as:

‘Newcomer innovation’ is a contribution influencing the outcome of a work-related issue that has been recognized by a coworker or hiring manager as (1) originating from the newcomer and (2) identified as novel or adding value to an established organizational practice.

Drawing on Schumpeter’s (1934) understanding of ‘innovation’ as “*novelty that creates economical value*”, the above definition of newcomer innovation is based on the dual criteria of ‘novelty’ and ‘value’. ‘Novelty’ is said to be present whenever coworker and/or manager identify a specific newcomer contribution as differing from earlier practice. ‘Value’ is understood in terms of newcomer’s contribution having utility value for somebody¹³. In practice, the acceptance and integration of the contribution in the workplace, and the reference of its value by interviewed subjects, typified a contribution’s utility value.

The notion of innovation presented is not a notion of widespread innovation across organizational units. The analytical focus was restricted to micro-organizational variations in local practice (Ellström, 2010) talked about as somehow connected to entry processes. Over time such micro-organizational variations may, or may not be amplified into widespread innovations. Thus, tentative detection of ‘newcomer innovation’ in case study interviews was identified by interviewing veteran coworkers and managers about ‘contributions’ and ‘inspirations’ from newcomers in supplementary questions pertaining to accounts of shared work and interactions during the entry period:

- “... what was his/her [newcomer’s] contribution to your shared work?
- “... in which situations did he/she [newcomer] act as an inspiration for you?”

¹³ Interpretation of the innovation criterion of ‘value’ as having utility value for somebody draws on interpretations of the Schumpeterian concept of innovation by e.g. Høyrup (2010) considering employee-driven innovation in relation to process- and service-innovation.

Introducing the theoretical perspective of *Complex Responsive Processes* to research on organizational entry

Generally speaking, researchers' theoretical pre-assumptions on 'organization' as a social phenomenon will affect their way of conceptualizing organizational entry and organizational socialization. Such theoretical pre-assumptions are not often dealt with in the research literature on organizational socialization (Revsbæk, 2013b). As Kramer argues, the field of organizational socialization is characterized by the use of a-theoretical, heuristic models, "*lacking any coherent theoretical perspective to explain the overall process*" (Kramer, 2010:10). The literature seldom moves beyond simplistic notions based on dualist logic of assimilation versus accommodation: 'either you change, or we change'. As long as options are restricted to either 'veteran influencing newcomer' or 'newcomer influencing veteran' (or possibly a bit of both) the reciprocal nature and complexity of entry processes – and indeed of any social process – is ignored. For such reasons a proposal could be made for the adoption of a *complexity* theory perspective viewing organized social life as made up of complex responsive processes between the individuals involved (Stacey, 2010; 2011). According to such theoretical framework what we retrospectively label 'veteran uncertainty', 'newcomer innovation' or 'newcomer adjustment' is brought about through an iterative local interplay of intentions and fluctuating power relations between mutually engaged individuals.

“The interplay of intentions takes the form of local interactions of communication, power relating and ideologically-based choosing which can be understood as the daily politics of organizational life (Stacey, 2010:9)

Ralph Stacey brings together G.H. Mead's social behaviorism with Norbert Elias' process sociology and refers to the computer simulations of *complex adaptive systems* as a source domain for providing analogies that may enrich our understanding of the evolution of organizational life (Stacey, 2010; 2011). Approaching organizational life from a perspective of complexity theory, Stacey interprets organizations as "*interdependent individual agents [who] are forming patterns of organization in the interplay of their intentional acts while, at the same time, those individuals are being formed by the patterns they are creating*" (Ibid.:57). Drawing on Mead's vocabulary, Stacey emphasizes the particularization of global themes in local interactions by specific actors in specific situations in ongoing processes of gesturing and responding. Global organizational themes articulated (for example by management in management directives) in response to some perceived deficiency in the organizational habitual practice, evolves over time and is iteratively taken up by a variety of individuals throughout the organization (Stacey, 2010). Articulated global themes and 'cult values' (Mead, 1934) of the organization emerge in ongoing negotiations and communication between individuals in local interactions throughout the organization. They are taken up,

particularized and hence changed in continuous local interaction involving specific individuals in specific situations. No newcomer thus enters the exact same organization as newcomers before him or her (cf. 'panta rhei', Heraclitus).

Case study design

The applied multi-perspective interview design consisted of individual semi-structured qualitative interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Both organizational newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers were interviewed. Interview themes emphasized shared work experiences and the applied induction practices. Six subcases of organizational entry were covered by the interviews. In each sub-case newcomer, coworker and manager were interviewed twice. The first interview took place one month after newcomer's entry and the second interview three months later. All newcomer entries and case study sub-cases related to employment in the company support functions.

A case study contact in the HR division of the case company was responsible for identifying possible entry cases and newcomer interviewees. The hiring manager of each participating newcomer selected a veteran coworker to participate in the interview design based on researcher guidelines. The guidelines stipulated that the veteran coworker had been engaged in work-related interactions with the newcomer during the initial period of newcomer's employment (the first month of newcomer employment). The case study included a total of 34 interviews with six newcomers, six veteran coworkers, and six hiring managers. Apart from interviewing, the study also included participant observation of company onboarding seminars and introductory e-learning programs.

Cross-perspective analyses of subcase interviews showed interviewees articulating a number of shared entry period incidents concerning collaboration, negotiation and conflict. In each sub-case mutually-referred-to-incidents from the entry period collaborations, were spontaneously articulated by two or three sub-case interviewees. The mutually-referred-to-incidents were characterized by a particular emotionality of conflict or surprise. A cross-perspective analysis of those incidents enabled the analytical figure of 'interplay of intentions' (Stacey, 2010) between the involved actors (see more in thesis Chapter 7).

Preliminary findings

The case study company was characterized by rapid growth. High hiring and turnover rates contributed to an average seniority of 2,4 years in the company. A case study newcomer (X1) described the company as a 'young organization' despite

having been founded more than a decade ago. He elaborated¹⁴:

Newcomer (X1): "... a lot of people are completely new to the organization. Only a few have been here for a long time. And still, some things seem to have been practiced for many years, but people don't quite know how they are used to be done."

Several organizational change processes were articulated in the case study interviews. Some of the change initiatives were initially introduced by group executive management and particularized by hiring managers, veteran coworkers and newcomers when interviewed about organizational life at the time of the entry processes. Adding to the organizational flux, layoffs were announced six days into the first round of case study interviews.

This added to the perceived organizational instability at the time of the newcomers' entries. The case study newcomers therefore became participants in the change processes in ways reflecting and affecting existing power figurations between veteran coworkers and hiring managers - the latter being themselves fairly recently employed. Two such case study sub-cases clearly demonstrating this are referred to below.

Hiring managers of the sub-cases entered the organization seven (X1) and five months (X3) prior to the entry of 'their' newcomer employees. Furthermore, the hiring managers were acquainted with the newcomer employee from shared work experiences in an earlier employment. This makes for a situation where 'interpersonal trust' between newcomer and hiring manager may be counted on from newcomer's very entry date¹⁵. The newcomer may be 'new' to the organization, but to his hiring manager it was the renewal of an established working relationship.

¹⁴ Most of the interview quotes by newcomers, hiring managers and veteran coworkers presented in this paper (Revsbaek, 2013a), are referred to in the Chapters 3, 6 and 7 in the main thesis.

¹⁵ Van Maanen and Schein (1979) refer to "*the sort of interpersonal trust with others on the scene which is necessary to exert meaningful influence*" (Ibid:257) and argues organizational members are hence "*likely to have the most impact upon others in the organization... at points furthest from any boundary crossing*" (Ibid:224) when "*the person may have 'gone native' and has consequently lost the sort of marginality and detachment necessary to suggest critical alterations in the social scheme of things*" (Ibid:257). In the two case study sub-cases presented here 'interpersonal trust' is already present between hiring managers and 'their' newcomers from the day of newcomer's entry.

Hiring manager (X3):

“He [newcomer] knows what kind of person I am, and I know what kind of person he is (...) I know what he [newcomer] represents. That’s something I am only just getting to know about other newcomers. I already have the trust in him (...) so in that sense he is ahead, due to the knowledge we have of each other. Besides that, I treat them alike. “

In the context of different articulated change agendas by veteran coworker and hiring manager of another subcase (X1), the veteran coworker associated the entry of the newcomer with her own uncertainty and a sense of being the outsider, while newcomer is viewed as part of the establishment.

Veteran coworker (X1):

“I am old school, really old school compared to the others [the newcomers] ... I am skilled at some things doing some kind of work, but I am just average at what I do now. (...) we are our own little department, and it is really a sense of me being alone; not them [the newcomers].”

Similarly, the veteran coworker in the first subcase (X3) expressed uncertainty concerning the future of his work and job security following a newcomers’ entry.

Veteran coworker (X3):

“In such a small department as ours, having two newcomers arrive at the same time is really too much, because it creates an insecurity at some level, because, well, we know what’s about to happen [referring to the announced round of layoffs]. At some level it causes insecurity. I don’t know if it is my own insecurity, well yes, perhaps it’s a mixture. What job functions will I get? How are we going to share this ‘cake’ between us?”

Linking concepts of ‘socialization’ and ‘newcomer innovation’

To understand the process of socialization in this interplay of intentions (Stacey, 2010) between hiring manager, veteran coworker and newcomer, I look to George Herbert Mead’s writings on becoming a self in a collective (Mead, 1934). According to Mead, attainment of selfhood presupposes interdependency between the individual and its social surroundings. Socializing on the part of the individual is interpreted as acquiring a sense of the attitude of the ‘generalized other’ in a community:

“... he [the individual] must also, in the same way that he takes the attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward one another, take their attitudes toward the various phases or aspects of the common social activity or set of social undertakings in which, as members of an organized society or social group, they are all engaged” (Mead 1934:154-155).

Following Mead, the socialization of newcomer can be considered as a process of becoming as Self in a collective, depicting the organizational newcomer as learning about the attitudes of others through interactions and conversations with managers, veteran coworkers and fellow newcomers. Picking up on the global themes articulated by veteran coworkers and managers, newcomers establish a sense of the attitude of generalized other in the organization toward the work. Expanding the way Stacey (2010) characterizes processes of generalization and particularization from Mead’s work it becomes relevant in the case study to explain that there are different attitudes of different subgroups in the organization to consider when enacting membership in the organization. Different global themes offer a variety in ‘generalized other’-related attitudes that newcomer may (more or less unconsciously) particularize by the way he or she performs work related tasks, and through which his workplace-related Self, the community and hence his membership is constituted.

Across several case study interviews a global organizational theme of ‘alignment’ is articulated. A sense of “lack of standardization”, “immature formalization of procedures”, and a dominant habitus of “everybody having to invent the wheel themselves” is articulated in the thematic context of ‘alignment’. A newcomer (X3) in one of the mentioned sub-cases learned about and made sense of the global organizational theme of ‘alignment’ from conversations with managers and veteran coworkers inside and outside company headquarters. In a particular situation, asked by manager to come up with ways of solving a certain task in collaboration with a particular veteran coworker, newcomer (X3) responded in *alignment-supporting* ways:

Newcomer (X3): “I need to understand what my role is in the general game of this organization, and what we [the company, the department] are trying to achieve.” (...) “I listen to the people around me and to those in other parts of the organization. I try to get around, find out what is going on outside Headquarters. And I visit the suppliers... Besides this I sit down and search out the intranet and find out what has already been created. ...A lot of people would prefer to sit down and start all over when doing tasks like this one, but I am a big opponent of such an approach, meaning, that what I am about to do, I assume at least 50 people in this company have

worked on before me. So it is about stealing and getting things done.”

In the process of socializing himself, trying to manifest a certain attitude (of ‘alignment’) toward the shared work the newcomer is changing the practice and influencing the veteran coworker. The veteran coworker identifies the newcomer’s introduction of an intranet template to their shared work as a contribution by newcomer:

Veteran coworker (X3):

“He [newcomer] uses our intranet a lot for searching out information – and then he comes across this material. I guess, almost all company presentations are available in the intranet. I was surprised this information existed. So, in that way he is contributing. He is searching out and taking in what is available of things that we [newcomer and himself] can then steal with arms and legs. But in this way he is giving on, what he found on the intranet as an inspiration, saying ‘oh well, this just happened to exist’ (...) We as veteran are engaged with our hands in the soil, so to speak ... and then all the sudden, there are a lot of things, that we as veterans don’t spend time on searching out in daily doings because we are not new to the organization.”

The notion of ‘newcomer innovation’ by Levine and his colleagues (2001; 2003) implies that the intention to innovate lies with newcomer. This assumption is in line with the general notion of ‘individualization’ in the organizational socialization literature (Kramer, 2010). The perspective of complex responsive processes (Stacey, 2010) considers any incident (also those we might retrospectively agree to label ‘newcomer innovation’¹⁶) as emerged in the interplay of intentions between the involved individuals. Considering the perceived change of practice in the mentioned subcase as a matter of newcomer particularizing an attitude of ‘alignment’, ‘newcomer innovation’ during organizational entry is possibly understood as a change in habitual practice brought about as newcomer particularizes certain global change themes over others in an organizational reality of many different global themes. Such an understanding challenges the simplistic dualist models in previous organizational socialization research literature, which implies a disjunctive relationship between newcomer assimilation and group/organizational accommodation. Instead, such understanding illustrates the integration of the newcomer and the change of the collective as originated by the same process of entry.

¹⁶ The term ‘newcomer innovation’ is foreign to the perspective of complex responsive processes (Stacey 2010, 2011).

Drawing on the theoretical perspective of complex responsive processes (Stacey, 2010; 2011), it is suggested to view such particularization (and hence possible innovation) on behalf of newcomer as simultaneously enabled by and affecting fluctuating power figurations in local interactions between newcomer, veteran coworkers and hiring manager.

Conclusion

The presented case study offers a reciprocal perspective on newcomer and veteran experiences during organizational entry processes. The study suggests understanding organizational socialization in terms of G. H. Mead on the process of attaining selfhood in a collective by acquiring a sense of the attitude of the ‘generalized other’ in the collective. Identified ‘newcomer innovation’ incidents in a rapid changing organization are suggested to be understood in terms of newcomer particularizing certain organizational themes over others while participating in the organizational practice.

The study suggests that the notion of ‘newcomer innovation’ during organizational entry processes be subjected to a *de-centering* away from newcomer. Drawing on the theoretical perspective of *complex responsive processes* (Stacey 2010, 2011) ‘newcomer innovation’ incidents are understood as *enabled* by and affecting power figurations between newcomers, coworkers and hiring managers engaged in the interplay of intentions of local interaction.

References

- Ashford, S. & Nurmohamed, S. (2012). From Past to Present and Into the Future: A Hitchhiker’s Guide to The Socialization Literature. In C.R. Wanberg (Ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 8-24). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ashforth, B.E., Sluss, D.M., & Saks, A.M. (2007). Socialization tactics, proactive behavior, and newcomer learning: Integrating socialization models, *Journal of vocational behavior*, 70, 447-462.
- Ellström, P.-E. (2010). Practice-based innovation: a learning perspective, *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 22(1/2), 27–40.
- Feldman, D.C. (2012). The impact of socializing newcomers on insiders. In C. R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 215-229). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Hansen, T. & Levine, J.M. (2009). Newcomers as change agents: Effects of newcomers' behavioral style and teams' performance optimism, *Social Influence*, 4(1), 46-61.
- Høyrup, S. (2010). Employee-driven innovation and workplace learning: basic concepts, approaches and themes, *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 16(2), 143-154.
- Gallagher, E.B. & Sias, P.M. (2009): The new employee as a source of uncertainty: Veteran employee information seeking about new hires, *Western Journal of Communication*, 73(1), 23-46.
- Kramer, M.W. (2010). *Organizational Socialization: Joining and leaving organizations*. UK, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interview: Introduktion til et håndværk*, 2. Udg. Kbh., DK: Hans Reitzel.
- Levine, J.M., Choi, H.-S. & Moreland, R.L. (2003). Newcomer innovation in work teams. In P.B. Paulus & B.A. Nijstad (Eds.), *Group creativity: Innovation through collaboration* (pp. 202-224). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Levine, J.M. & Moreland, R.L. (1985). Innovation and socialization in small groups. In S. Moscovici, G. Mugny, & E. Van Avermaet (Eds.), *Perspectives on minority influence* (pp. 143-169). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge university Press.
- Levine, J.M., Moreland, R.L., & Choi, H.-S. (2001). Group socialization and newcomer innovation. In M.A. Hogg & R.S. Tindale (Eds.), *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Group Process*, pp. 86-106. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.
- Mead, G.H. (1934). *Mind, Self, and Society – from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. C.W. Morris (Ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Morrison, E.W. (1993). Newcomer information seeking: Exploring types, modes, sources, and outcomes, *Academy of management journal*, 36, 557-589.
- Revsbæk, L. (2013b). Modtagelsessamspillet lokale økologi, *Academic Quarter, special issue: Humanistic leadership research*, 6(6), 175-186.
- Saks, A.M. & Gruman, J.A. (2012). Getting Newcomers On Board: A Review of Socialization Practices and Introduction to Socialization Resources Theory.

- In C.R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 27-55). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Stacey, R.D. (2010). *Complexity and Organizational Reality. Uncertainty and the Need to Rethink Management after the Collapse of Investment Capitalism*, 2nd Ed. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Stacey, R.D. (2011). *Strategic Management and Organizational Dynamics. The Challenge of Complexity*, 6th Ed. Essex, UK: Financial Times Prentice Hall.
- Van Maanen, J. & Schein, E.H. (1979). Toward a Theory of Organizational Socialization. In B.M. Staw (Ed.), *Research in Organizational Behavior*, vol.1 (pp. 209-264). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

C. The Ecology of Entry (Revsbaek, 2013b – journal paper)

Original title:

Modtagelsessamspillet's lokale økologi

English title:

The Ecology of Entry

First published (in Danish): Summer 2013

To cite the Danish paper:

Revsbæk, L. (2013b). Modtagelsessamspillet's lokale økologi, *Akademisk Kvarter*, 6(6), 175-186, DK, Aalborg: Aalborg Universitet.

The Ecology of Entry¹⁷

By Line Revsbaek

Organizational socialization and employee induction

Employee induction is drawing increased attention in both organizational research and practice (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). Unfortunately, many companies experience rather large newcomer turnover rates (Smith et al., 2012). Recruitment and induction of new employees is costly for hiring organizations and laborious for newcomers and veterans, even more so when early newcomer turnover causes employing organizations to go through recruitment and induction once again. Therefore, companies with a high flow of employees and large newcomer turnover rates are likely to benefit from improving their induction practices and approaches.

Intending to optimize company induction practices, many (large) organizations aim to establish and refine formalized onboarding programs, often run by HR employees in the organization (Sluss & Thompson, 2012). Researchers in the field of organizational socialization addressing the learning and socialization of transitioning individuals have repeatedly concluded that everyday, work-related, and informal interactions between newcomers and veterans (coworkers and managers) are important for the socialization of newcomers: “Some of the most important socialization is decidedly local” (Ashford & Nurmohamed, 2012, p. 16). In a review of the research on organizational socialization, Wanberg (2012) argued for research on the local interplay between newcomers and veteran organizational members during the period of entry and also on the impact of newcomers’ entries on organizational veterans (Feldman, 2012).

Drawing on a case study¹⁸ of organizational entry and employee induction from Aalborg University, Denmark, this paper portrays the local interplay between a newcomer, a veteran coworker, and a hiring manager in a changing organization. The paper argues that institutionalized employee induction based on assumptions of the “novice newcomer” and the “knowledgeable veteran” is incongruent with the perceived learning positions of newcomers and veterans in changing organizations.

¹⁷ Revsbaek (2013b) “The Ecology of Entry” is a translation of Revsbaek (2013), “Modtagelsessamspillet lokale økologi”, *Academic Quarter*, 6(6), 175-186. DK, Aalborg: Aalborg University.

¹⁸ The case organization is anonymous. The research is cofinanced by Mercuri Urval A/S and Aalborg University.

The paper suggests the notion of “ecology of entry” as an approach to organizational induction making the local work-related interactions between newcomers, veteran coworkers, and hiring managers a primary arena of employee induction. The paper is a first outline of a complexity theory–informed perspective (Prigogine, 1997; Stacey, 2010) on the interplay between newcomers and veterans. The paper reintroduces employee induction as a people-manager responsibility rather than a task to be “outsourced” to separate HR units. Employee induction is thus perceived as related to the task of general people managing.

Organizational temporality

As researchers and practitioners, our theoretical thinking on organizational life conditions what we are able to consider about organizational induction processes. Ashforth (2012) noted with regard to research on organizational socialization that temporality is an overlooked factor: “Time tends to play only a backstage role in most socialization research, absolutely essential to the process of socialization but largely unheralded” (Ibid.:161). Here Ashforth highlighted temporality in relation to the learning process of newcomers. I argue that a notion of “organizational temporality” is lacking in research on organizational socialization. Hence, organizational changes are most often not considered as a relevant context for newcomer-veteran interactions during periods of entry. The case study presented briefly in this paper illustrates the entry interplay between a newcomer, a veteran coworker, and a hiring manager influenced by the temporality of the organization and ongoing changes in the broader organizational context.

Our theoretical thinking about organizations sets the premise for our conceptualizations about organizational entry and organizational socialization. The question of how we understand and conceptualize the organization into which newcomers enter is not a focus in the literature on organizational socialization. Using Piagetian terminology about newcomer “assimilation” versus organizational “accommodation” to frame the negotiation between newcomers and veterans reflects theoretical assumptions about organizational stability. The outcome of such negotiations between newcomers and veterans is understood in terms of newcomers either adjusting to existing practices and culture or innovating these (see also Revsbaek, 2011). Such assumptions about organizational stability resonate with the systems theory notion of equilibrium states (cf. Lewin, 1947). From an equilibrium perspective, organizational change is perceived as a process of unfreezing the equilibrium, moving it, and refreezing it in a different organizational state (Ibid.). Already questioning the basic assumption of how to relevantly conceptualize the organizational setting into which newcomers enter, I look toward complexity theory (Prigogine, 1997) and the perspective of *complex responsive processes* (Stacey, 2010) when elaborating on the notion of organizational temporality.

Any notion about temporality and organizational temporality initially takes us back to Heraclitus’s principle of *panta rhei*, allowing us to consider that no organizational

newcomer enters the (exact) same organizational setting as did former newcomers. Yet drawing on old insights, it is still a theoretical struggle to understand the meaning of temporality as the basis of conceptualizing organizational life. Often, time is left out of the equation when researchers conceptualize organizational culture, capability building, and other aspects of organizational behavior, including employee induction and organizational socialization. Understanding organizations as processes of local interactions between interdependent agents forming global patterns of interaction (Stacey, 2010) makes it clear that trends and relations in the organizational setting are potentially different – or bear different meanings in relation to the particular entry process – from one organizational entry to the next. From a perspective of complex responsive processes (Ibid.), organizational entry can be understood as a *specific punctuation of a particular local interplay between particular agents in particular organizational circumstances*.¹⁹

A main lever in a complexity theory perspective is emphasizing *time* and *temporality* in any construct and occurrence (Prigogine, 1997). From the perspective of *complex responsive processes*, organizations are understood as *processes* of human activity, their nature viewed as ongoing processes of organizing and organizational becoming (Stacey, 2010). The notion of organizational becoming resonates with Prigogine's complexity theory on *ontological indeterminism* regarding the irreversibility of time and the uncertainty of the future. "Future [is] ... under perpetual construction [which] ... can be understood in nonlinear, non-equilibrium terms, where instabilities, or fluctuations, break symmetries, particularly the symmetry of time so that new order emerges in disorder" (Stacey, 2010:56). Writing about organizational dynamics and management, Stacey took up complexity theory causalities and challenged essentialist and reified thinking about organizations as autonomous units and collective actors. From this radical process perspective on organizational life, Stacey and his colleagues from Hertfordshire University viewed local interactions between individuals as the main analytic unit and approached organizational emergence and novelty from a micro-organizational perspective. "The organization" is thus the pattern in and of local interaction brought about in complex responsive processes between diverse and interdependent actors each trying to accomplish something specific (Ibid.). "The organization" is the pattern in the shared activity emerging and being reinforced or changed in the collective interplay of different individual intensions. Organization is continuously created, negotiated, and dynamically sustained (Ibid.).

Stacey's complexity theoretical perspective, viewing organizational life in terms of patterns of behavior, is known to highlight the importance of informal as well as formal aspects of organizational life as what is actually going on and being

¹⁹ The theoretical perspective of *complex responsive processes* by Stacey (2010) and his Hertfordshire colleagues is a theory about organizational life in general and management in particular, not a theory about organizational entry processes. I take up this theoretical perspective in my work on organizational entry processes.

produced and managed in organizations. The radical process theory approach in the *complex responsive processes* perspective (Stacey, 2010) acknowledges simultaneous organizational stability and instability – that is, organizational continuity and novelty in the flux of continuous organizing. Such process theory perspective is useful in understanding organizational entry, newcomer socialization, and employee induction in changing organizations. Considering organizational life from a perspective of *complex responsive processes* (Stacey, 2010), newcomers are viewed as entering the ongoing patterning of activity between organizational members. Some tendencies in this fluctuating activity will have been known for quite some time prior to the particular newcomer entry – this is what we might call stability in the organization or identity/culture – while other tendencies might be more recent.

I present in the following section an empirical case of organizational entry from a doctorate study on employee induction in a changing organization.

Case study on employee induction in a changing organization

Method

In a case study on employee induction in support functions of a large production company in Denmark, I focused on participants' experiences of work-related interactions between newcomers, veteran coworkers, and hiring managers during the period of entry. The study included six entry processes in six different departments in two different company business units. The case narrative in this paper is from one of these entry cases.

The case study data were collected while doing participant observations of induction seminars facilitated by company HR employees and “trying out” company e-learning programs, in addition to semi-structured qualitative research interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) of newcomers, veteran coworkers, and hiring managers. Each participant was interviewed twice: one month after the entry of the newcomer and again three months later. The participants were interviewed about their experiences related to induction practices and their experience of the work-related interactions between the newcomer, the veteran coworker, and the hiring manager during the period of entry. The study includes a total of 34 interviews.

Presenting a selected case

In the selected case (X1) in this paper, a newcomer enters a company department of six people. Three employees are engaged in the department's main function. Two of these are newcomers: one is the entry case newcomer, who entered the organization one month prior to the interviews (newcomer X1), and the other is a recently entered employee with four months' seniority. The third employee (veteran coworker X1) engaged in the department's main functions has been with the organization for more

than 8 years. The hiring manager (hiring manager X1) is relatively new to the organization, having been employed six months before the entry case newcomer. The hiring manager recruited both employee newcomers upon her own organizational entry and knows them from their shared former workplace.²⁰

The veteran is asked to assume the role of “buddy” for the entry case newcomer. A buddy has a more informal and less educative mentorship-inspired function for new department colleagues.

This case diverges from the usual assumptions concerning the organizational newcomer as someone who enters into an unknown organizational context and into relationships with coworkers and managers previously unknown to the newcomer in a setup where hiring managers and veteran coworkers have considerable organizational seniority and are well acquainted with each other. Such assumptions would likely characterize recruitment and entry processes in an organizational setting identified by high levels of continuity, high average seniority, low turnover rates, and low or slow growth. The selected entry case, though, is somewhat typical for the case organization: Three of the six entry cases in the study (that is, all entry cases in one of the two participating business units) feature newcomer employees being hired by relatively newly hired and now hiring managers. In two of these three cases, the hiring manager and newcomer know each other from a shared former workplace and thus perceive themselves as being better acquainted and sharing more confidentiality with each other than with the veteran coworkers in their departments.

The case company is characterized by a history of organizational growth and high hiring rates. The average seniority of employees is a little over two years. The company is a workplace characterized by little continuity or, one might say, by continuous organizational organization becoming manifested in a low degree of formalized work procedures, ongoing efforts to formalize work processes, and repeated restructuring of the organization.

Change as circumstance

A variety of changes are in play and bear meaning in the organizational setting at the time of the entry processes studied. Identifying the different aspects of change going on illustrates the temporality of the organization as an important context when considering newcomer-veteran interactions during entry.

Processes of change in the case organization are as follows:

²⁰ The case organization applied standardized assessment and selection procedures facilitated by company HR departments. This particular entry case was no exception.

- Reallocation of well-known work assignments due to particular employee resignation. This is a process of change originating from the flow of employees in and out of the department.
- Implementation of new work assignments, functions, and procedures in the department, initiated by group executive decisions.
- Introduction of new professional approaches to the department practice by the relatively newly hired department manager.

To illustrate how changing organizational settings affect the interplay between newcomers and veterans, each identified process of change is shown in Figure 1 as constituting a challenge or assignment either known or unknown to the newcomer and the veteran.

Processes of change in the organization	Newcomer	Veteran
Work assignments familiar to department employees and not affected by reallocation of work due to employee resignation	Unknown	Known
Work assignments familiar to the department but reallocated due to employee resignation	Unknown	Unknown
Group management implementing new assignments and work functions	Unknown	Unknown
Newly hired manager introducing new principles of department practice	Known	Unknown

The organizational newcomer faces specific assignments and challenges from a perspective of *anticipating discontinuity*, that is, expecting in advance that much will be unknown to him or her when entering this new organizational setting and taking up work. By contrast, the veteran is likely to face challenges and assignments from a perspective of *anticipating continuity*, expecting that much will be known.

In the literature on organizational socialization, psychological “uncertainty management” is presented as a dominant perspective explaining newcomer proactive behavior (Gruman & Saks, 2012). The assumption is that organizational newcomers experience high degrees of uncertainty and anxiety entering a new organizational setting and are inclined to seek out information and feedback from veterans and managers to reduce uncertainty, insecurity, and anxiety (Ashforth et al., 2007). Due to the diverse changes in the case organization and the department in the entry case presented above, the veteran is similarly experiencing uncertainty, ambiguity, and anxiety. Hence, the organizational circumstance of change is as much a learning situation for the veteran coworker as is entry into the organization for the newcomer.

Veteran coworker (X1):

“I am old school, really old school, compared to the others.... I am very skilled at some things, but I am just medium skilled at what I do now.”

Furthermore, the entry case manager says, on initiating a new professional approach in the department practice:

Hiring manager (X1):

“I have taken away aspects of the work that constituted them [the veterans] in their role. Of course there is much at stake. (...) I am sure it is a hard time for her [the veteran coworker].”

The reported case illustrates how the assumption of the “novice newcomer” and the “knowledgeable veteran” is questioned in continuously changing organizational settings, where the newcomer might be positioned as competent and the veteran as incompetent in relation to what is perceived to be relevant future worker capabilities and needed performance. The formalized induction initiative of a buddy relationship between the newcomer (X1) and the veteran coworker (X1) based on apprenticeship assumptions is in dissonance with their actual learning positions. My argument is that in a changing organization, a newcomer might be a role model in some part of the work (e.g., in relation to the changed principles of department practice), while the veteran is knowledgeable concerning other aspects of the work (e.g., how to manage routine-based assignments in the departmental portfolio).

The history of interaction and relationships between the hiring manager, the newcomer, and the veteran possibly enhances such asymmetry between newcomer and veteran as, respectively, “competent” and “incompetent” in relation to the management’s desired departmental practice and profile.

Relational histories significant in organizational entry processes

In the case presented in this paper, the newcomer (X1) is entering into an ongoing discursive negotiation in the organization represented by the perspectives of the hiring manager and the veteran arguing the new versus the old way of doing things, soft versus hard professionalism, decentralized flexibility versus centralized standardization, and inductive versus deductive work methods.

The veteran coworker remarks on the difference in opinion between her and the hiring manager:

Veteran coworker (X1):

“Neither way of looking at it is better than the other. They are two completely different ways of looking at it. (...) If more people share an understanding of what the world is about, then it is really difficult if you don’t agree. (...) They [the newly hired manager and the newcomer employees] all come from another corporate world where the approach is different from what I believe in, but they agree on how they view things.”

Both the hiring manager and the veteran coworker refer to present discourses in the broader organizational conversations (also manifested in managerial directives and vision statements) as they argue their difference of opinion concerning the choice of approach in the department practice and their assessment of what is needed in the development of that practice.

In addition to this, the newcomer and the hiring manager each describe their previous acquaintance with each other from a former workplace as a resource in their collaboration during the current entry process.

Hiring manager (X1):

“Knowing each other, like we do, has a lot of benefits for the process of starting up a new employee.... We have mutual security and trust, which has enabled me to take Peter [the newcomer] in on assignments very quickly after he started. I know from before what kind of work he is able to do and what capabilities he possesses. So I have had the courage to push him a little more than I would usually do.”

Newcomer (X1): “She [hiring manager] knows what I can do and what my interests are. (...) It is nice to know that the reason you are here [in this company/department] is because of what you are able to do. It

gives you a certain confidence when you want to attempt contributing with something.”

The veteran (X1) describes how the prior acquaintance between the newcomer and the hiring manager affects her response to being buddy to the newcomer and to finding her work schedule overloaded during the period of the newcomer’s entry:

Veteran coworker (X1):

“Peter [the newcomer] knew our manager in advance, and of course that is also why I didn’t feel Peter was left on his own. (...) I feel like he is coming back to old colleagues. (...) It is really a sense of me being alone; not them [the newcomers].”

Unlike other buddy relationships, which are part of employee induction in this organization, the veteran coworker and the newcomer in this particular entry case do not get together in the formal buddy relationship during the period of entry.

Toward a concept of “ecology of entry”

My argument for considering the “local ecology of entry” as a perspective in research on organizational entry and employee induction is based on the empirical observation that both newcomers and veteran organizational members become learning subjects in rapidly changing organizations. Organizational entry in changing organizational circumstances is insufficiently explained by common understandings of the newcomer as the unknowledgeable novice and the veteran as the knowledgeable organizational member.

The complexity theory of *complex responsive processes* (Stacey, 2010) views organizations from the perspective of local interaction and the global patterns emerging in that local interaction, thus emphasizing the evolving nature of organizing. The complex responsive processes perspective therefore offers theoretical grounds for conceptualizing about *organizational temporality* as a significant aspect in organizational entry processes and employee induction.

Theorizing about the ecology of entry – that is, the local informal bi-directional socialization process between newcomers, veteran coworkers, and managers – entails the following:

- considering **local** interactions between newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers as a primary arena of organizational entry, induction efforts, and mutual learning of newcomers and veterans
- guiding attention toward the **specific** constellations (in relationships, job functions, work organizing, and team-external collaborations) surrounding

the particular entry process of the particular newcomer in the particular organizational setting

- considering the **history** of relationships between the actors and the ascribed meaning of this history for current processes of change (and continuity) in the organizational setting

Conclusion – implications for research and practice

Within the research field of organizational socialization, Reichers (1987) has taken an interactionist approach to the socialization of organizational newcomers. Drawing on Mead's social behaviorism, Reichers argued that frequent interaction between organizational newcomers and veterans is the main mechanism in socializing newcomers. Effective employee induction is, by such criteria, any initiative that increases interactions between newcomers and veterans (Ibid.).

In suggesting the notion of ecology of entry, I draw on such interactionist approaches in researching organizational entry and employee induction. Additionally, the notion of ecology of entry suggests *contextualizing* the local interaction between newcomers and veterans during periods of entry in the global organizational flow of transformation in changing organizations. The research contribution of this paper is the introduction of *time* and *temporality* in organizational processes of relating as a significant factor to consider when researching organizational entry and employee induction. The paper identifies the importance of broader organizational change processes for the informal positioning between newcomers and veterans in changing organizations.

The local ecology of entry is a significant employee induction arena, and researchers and practitioners need to concern themselves with the dynamics between formal, institutionalized induction practices and the informal socialization between newcomers and veterans in work-related interactions. Each entry process needs to be considered from the perspective of the specific dynamics of the *local* interplay that the newcomer enters. Hiring managers are requested to make any standardized induction initiative concerning co-working newcomers and veterans (as is often the case with mentorship or buddy relationships) *context relevant* and flexible, taking the actual learning positions of the specific newcomer and veteran into consideration.

Focusing on the local ecology of entry challenges existing HR-driven employee induction practices, expanding the field of HR practice in relation to employee induction from merely educating newcomers in seminar settings to consulting hiring managers on their efforts and awareness of the local ecology of entry.

References

- Ashford, S. & Nurmohamed, S. (2012). From past to present and into the future: A hitchhiker's guide to the socialization literature. In C.R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 8-24). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ashforth, B.E. (2012). The role of time in socialization dynamics. In C.R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 161-186). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Bauer, T.N., & Erdogan, B. (2011). The effective onboarding of new employees. In S. Zedeck (Ed.), *APA handbook of industrial and organizational psychology, vol. 3: Maintaining, expanding, and contracting the organization* (pp. 51-64). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Daskalaki, M. (2012) Recontextualizing new employee induction: Organizational entry as a change space, *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 48(1), 93-114.
- Feldman, D.C. (2012). The impact of socializing newcomers on insiders. In C. R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 215-229). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interview: Introduktion til et håndværk*, 2nd Ed. Kbh., DK: Hans Reitzel.
- Prigogine, I. (1997). *The End of Certainty: Time, Chaos, and the New Laws of Nature*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Reichers, A.E. (1987). An interactionist perspective on newcomer socialization rates, *Academy of Management Review*, 12(2), 278-287.
- Revsbaek, L. (2011). Medarbejderintroduktion – Et bidrag til organisatorisk innovation. In N. Stegeager & E. Laursen (Eds.), *Organisationer i bevægelse, Læring- Udvikling – Intervention* (pp. 167-182). Kbh., DK: Samfundslitteratur.
- Revsbæk, L. (2013b). Modtagelsessamspillet lokale økologi, *Akademisk Kvarter, særudgave om humanistisk ledelsesforskning*, 6(6), 175-186. DK, Aalborg: Aalborg Universitet.
- Saks, A.M. & Gruman, J.A. (2012). Getting newcomers on board: A review of socialization practices and introduction to socialization resources theory. In

C.R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 27-55). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Sluss, D.M., & Tompson, B.S. (2012). Socializing the newcomer: The mediating role of leader-member exchange, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 119, 114-125.

Stacey, R.D. (2010). *Complexity and organizational reality: Uncertainty and the need to rethink management after the collapse of investment capitalism* (2nd ed.). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

D. Analyzing in the Present (Revsbaek & Tanggaard, 2014 – journal paper)

Original title:

Analyzing in the Present

Accepted for publication in *Qualitative Inquiry* in August 2014.

To cite the paper:

Revsbaek, L. & Tanggaard, L. (forthcoming). Analyzing in the Present, *Qualitative Inquiry*, SAGE Journals.

Analyzing in the Present

Line Revsbaek²¹ and Lene Tanggaard²²

Abstract

The paper²³ presents a notion of ‘analyzing in the present’ as a source of inspiration in analyzing qualitative research materials. The term emerged from extensive listening to interview recordings during everyday commuting to university campus. Paying attention to the way different parts of various interviews conveyed diverse significance to the listening researcher at different times, became a method of continuously opening up the empirical material in a reflexive, breakdown-oriented process of analysis. We argue, that situating analysis in the present of analyzing emphasize and acknowledge the interdependency between researcher and researched. On this basis, we advocate an explicit ‘open-state-of mind’ listening as a key aspect of analyzing qualitative material, often described only as a matter of reading transcribed empirical materials, reading theory and writing. The paper contributes to an ongoing methodological conversation about ‘troubling data’ (St. Pierre, 1997, 2011; Brinkmann, 2014) and ‘troubling method’ (Tanggaard, 2013).

Keywords: Analysis, qualitative interviews, *Philosophy of the Present*, G. H. Mead, abductive reasoning, interpretive qualitative inquiry.

²¹ The paper is accepted for publication in *Qualitative Inquiry*, SAGE Journals.

Corresponding author: Line Revsbaek, Ph.D.-Fellow Department of Learning and Philosophy, Faculty of Social Science, Aalborg University, Sohngaardsholmsvej 2, DK-9200 Aalborg, Denmark.

Email: lr@learning.aau.dk

²² Department of Communication & Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, Aalborg University

²³ The paper is based on a research project co-financed by Aalborg University and Mercuri Urval A/S.

"We carry our analysis as far as the control of subject matter requires, but always with the recognition that what is analysed out has its reality in the integration of what is taking place" (Mead, 1932:51).

Commuting Highway E45 reflexively

For both authors of this paper, it is a fact of our researcher working life that we need to travel the best part of an hour to and from the university "where we work", meaning "where our offices are located". Everyday commuting is part of working life for many researchers. However, we have found that the constraint of many traveling hours behind-the-wheel on Highway E45 has enabled a research practice of extensive listening to case study interview recordings, beyond the listening we would usually do to create interview transcripts. Our usual way of analyzing interview material would be to read and evaluate the written transcripts, and perhaps occasionally re-listen to bits of recordings, motivated by curiosity arising from the work with the transcribed texts. In the case we describe in this paper, we found ourselves listening to interview recordings extensively, without any particular motivation to search in a particular part or for any specific content. Listening to one research interview from beginning to end took approximately the hour needed to arrive at our university offices.

Although we use the first person plural, our practice has more often been listening to the interviews when driving alone, often with different aspects of the work in mind, both those relevant to the case study and otherwise. Casual but attentive listening to the interview recording while driving, with a voice recorder as the only supplementary remedy at our hand to capture any possible significance coming to mind. In order to see what further life the voiced associations would later gain through our writing.

The practice of re-listening to interview recordings, while commuting to and from work, started out as a way of immersing ourselves in the empirical material. Repeated listening to the recordings made us aware of the process of thinking, imagining, recalling, remembering and associating occurring when we found ourselves getting caught up with a specific, peculiar aspect of an interview. Our encounter with the recorded interview in those incidents constituted a small scale 'breakdown of understanding' (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011), eliciting our associations across the empirical material, our experience of being in the interview conversations, situations of presenting our work to others, recollections of theoretical fragments, incidents from our own lives and other things of some importance and apparent relevance. An experience of flashbacks akin to what Jagatheesan (2005) describes as a fieldworker "trying to make sense" (ibid.:668) during fieldwork, only in our case, occurring during the listening to interview recordings.

As such, a practice of noting our evoked recollections and associations situated in the listening present and related to the interview incident catching our attention, emerged as a strategy in our data analysis. It is this strategy that we share with the reader in the present paper. All listening was done in the context of making sense of our inquiry and trying to understand what and how the recorded empirical material could inform us. And we were indeed informed by the responses evoked while attending to the recorded material, through the process of listening. We were informed in a way that reflected not only the inquiry at hand, but also our relationship to the work.

In this paper, we attempt to understand this process of thinking/analyzing that emerged from being attentive listeners to recorded research material. In doing so, we draw on G. H. Mead's *Philosophy of the Present* (1932) and 'temporal paradox' to explain our notion of 'analyzing in the present' and the process of analyzing in terms of the researcher's past experience being reconstructed and reinterpreted from the standpoint of the emergent present²⁴.

Three decades of Springsteen

We start out describing an everyday case of the 'listening experience' that we find characterizes our notion of analyzing in the present. The illustrative case refers to the common experience of listening to a cherished piece of music, familiar to us, perhaps from childhood, unexpectedly impinging upon us one day, as the music is played on the radio, sparking memories from our past, and for some reason 'speaking' to us at this present moment, when we accidentally come across the tune.

Case 1: Springsteen as past-in-present, present-in-present, and future-in-present

A situation parallel to the 'living present' of analyzing that we describe in this paper regarding listening repeatedly to interview recordings throughout the process of analyzing qualitative research interviews, would be the event of listening to music you have previously encountered and been affected by, say, during your youth or childhood. There are pieces of music that, whenever you come across them in your adulthood, they seem always to be connected with this particular situation in which you as a younger person listened to it, enjoyed it and made sense out of it in relation to what you were immersed in at the time.

To me (author one), one of those pieces of music is a Springsteen track from his 1987 release. It is not really

²⁴ We would like to thank Chris Mowles, Soeren Willert and anonymous reviewers for commenting on this paper.

important, except to me, which specific track it is. The point made here is not about interpreting texts as much as about interpreting situations. It is about interpreting past situations in order to understand the present situation. The lyrics of the Springsteen track *did* matter in the childhood situation, in which the track first gained significance to me. I was 11 years at the time, so my understanding of English lyrics was greatly limited, yet the words “I got a Dollar in my pocket; there ain’t a cloud up above” had to mean “I don’t have much, but life is beautiful anyway!”

Listening to that same piece of music as an adult, not often but occasionally, takes me straight back to my childhood, where and when I was listening to the track, on my own and celebrating having overcome a huge obstacle, although fearing in advance I would not be able to. Feelings of being strong, capable and free were dominant sentiments back then. Listening to that music bringing me back to my childhood is like re-visiting the situation. The sentiments which the ‘re-visiting’ brings back appear to belong to my childhood, but are now again ‘available’ to me, I am back ‘with them’. The memory flashes are alive and in this adult situation, listening to this music from my childhood and being reminded of the associated sentiments, association to another significant situation of my life appears. This one is in my youth, on high school graduation day in 1996, alone after the ceremony in the schoolyard, with only my graduation papers in my hand and the exact change in my pocket to catch the bus outside the school. Again, the world was at my feet, I didn’t have a lot to bring, except for what I was and would do, and with a sense of certainty that this would be enough, “there ain’t a cloud up above”. Now, back in my car, in the adult present, driving to work at the university. I am currently struggling to complete my doctoral work, but there is no guarantee I will succeed. That is my sentiment, my concern; I am trying to find a path between trying to understand what I am doing and have done and creating the work. There are choices I am taking and they will be questioned. If I make other choices, they will also be questioned, though perhaps by other people. Is there a choice that I will not question myself as much in hindsight? And would this guide me in creating and completing the work. This is researcher reflexivity in play. In the car, on the way to work, listening to the radio, coincidentally hearing the Springsteen track that immediately takes me back to the childhood

situation, to the sentiments, the graduation day, the “dollar in my pocket”, and the “cloud’s not above”. I now have a perspective to understand and come to terms with the sense of being stuck in the work at hand, thinking differently, changing my analysis.

And so, listening to the Springsteen track in 2013, interpreting my past in terms of the present, anticipating my future, of submitting my doctorate, hoping the work will be deemed a ‘contribution’ and that I will be accepted as a qualified ‘researcher’. Both the childhood experience from 1988, the graduation day experience from 1996, the uncertainty I am currently experiencing with my doctoral work, as well as the lyrics from Bruce, which reach beyond my memories and current troubles, are part of *my* thinking, when I listen to the track driving to work, that day.

Locating data, understanding analysis - Placing ourselves in the interpretative tradition

What we consider data in our inquiries and how we understand the process of analyzing are thoroughly intertwined. Most handbooks on qualitative inquiry include chapters on methods for analyzing data. These books generally emphasize analysis as reading transcribed or written material, not necessarily following any prescribed procedure: *“By reading and rereading their empirical materials, they try to pin down their key themes and thereby, draw a picture of the presumptions and meanings that constitute the cultural world of which the textual material is a specimen”* (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2011:530). St. Pierre problematizes ‘data’ as something necessarily ‘textualized’ in order for it to be interpreted, arguing instead to think differently about ‘data’ by identifying ‘transgressive data’ such as emotional data, dream data, sensual data and response data (St. Pierre, 1997). St. Pierre thus demonstrates the rupture of a long held category of ‘data’ inherent in humanist qualitative methodology. Resonating with pragmatist views of data as ‘takens’ (rather than givens), selected for a purpose (Dewey 1929/1960 in Brinkmann, 2014), St. Pierre considers data as *“identified during analysis and not before. Until one begins to think, one cannot know what one will think with. In that sense, data are collected during thinking and, for me, especially during writing”* (St. Pierre, 2011:621). Hence, writing, and we would add listening, is a method of inquiry and ‘crystallization’ (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005; Pelias, 2013).

Whereas St. Pierre suggests to preserve and resignify the concept of ‘data’ *“even as we attempt to escape [its] meaning”* (St. Pierre, 1997:175), Brinkmann (2014) points out that ‘data’-related methodology vocabularies tends to lead us *“back to an outdated logical positivist account of ‘sense data’”* (Ibid.:721). Brinkmann relates

the notion of ‘data’ to inductive and deductive forms of analysis describing both as addressing the relationship between *data* and *theory*. Data-driven inductive analysis thus emphasize the ‘collection of data’, while theory-driven deductive analysis is ‘framing data’. Abduction is, instead, *“a form of reasoning that is concerned with the relationship between a situation and inquiry. It is neither data-driven nor theory-driven, but breakdown-driven”* (Brinkmann 2014:722, referring to Alvesson & Kärreman 2011). Situations causing us to stumble become data, requiring our abductive reasoning. Hence the analysis of situations, not texts. ‘Stumble data’ is then what drives breakdown-oriented research and *“inquiry is thus the process of trying to understand the situation by sense-making”* (Brinkmann, 2014:722).

To engage with the process of analyzing (recorded qualitative interviews) in terms of ‘analyzing in the present’, as we do in this paper, is a matter of troubling non-reflexive reliance on methods of analyzing (Tinggaard, 2013), and acknowledging the entanglement of data, data collection and data analysis (St. Pierre, 2011) in a way that brings researcher subjectivity to the methodological forefront considering researcher as her own most important instrument of research in comprehending human existence (Lave in Lave & Kvale 1995; Hasse 2011).

In following sections we illustrate the experience of listening to recorded research interviews in the process of interview analysis, and the researcher reflexivity elicited in such situations of listening. From time to time, the one-person reflexive commuting listening to case study interview recordings was substituted for ‘supervisory drives’. As doctoral student (author one) and supervisor (author two), we would drive together to the university campus, discussing our analytical experiences and emerging strategies, as we sought to understand the value of repeated listening to interview recordings for the construction of rich empirical material, taking the researcher into account as a participant in the process of inquiry.

The case study context

The analytical strategy and the following two cases outlined in this paper originates from a research project on organizational entry processes and newcomer innovation in a large production company in Denmark (Revsbaek 2011, 2013, in press). Many studies on organizational socialization and induction exclusively include newcomers, and not veterans as informants. As a result, the effects of entry processes on organizational veterans is given far less consideration (Feldman, 2012) and organizational entries are considered in terms of newcomer socialization and learning, more often than newcomer innovation (Revsbaek, 2011). In response, the present case study applies a multi-perspective interview design in which newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers are all interviewed on their experience of shared work during the process of newcomers entering the organization. In the longitudinal design, comprising six separate entry cases, including a total of 34 interviews, all interviewees are interviewed twice: One month after the newcomer’s entry and three months later. The theoretical perspective of

complex responsive processes (Stacey, 2010, 2012; Griffin, 2002; Mowles, 2011), drawing on Mead's theory of emergence (Mead, 1932, 1934) and Elias' process sociology (Elias 1994/2000) informed the analysis of the entry stories of newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers. The radical temporal perspective in the complexity stance, along with Mead's and Elias' philosophies, has founded an autobiographic research practice of *reflexive narrative inquiry* (Stacey, 2012)²⁵. In our case, it inspired the notion of 'analyzing in the present'.

We now go on to present two cases of 'analyzing in the present', that is, the lived experience of listening to recorded material. As we do so, we discuss Mead's *Philosophy of the Present* (Mead, 1932; Flaherty & Fine, 2001) and relate to reported experiences of listening to recorded research interviews, otherwise done only in the process of transcription (Tilley, 2003; Bird, 2005).

Re-listening to interviews as a source of (new) data

The case study interviews were conducted (by author one) on location at the case study organization (and not in her researcher university office). Revisiting the interview situation through listening to interview recordings offered rich 'transgressive data' (St. Pierre, 2011), informing the overall analysis and inquiry. We found that listening to a recorded interview evokes responses with the 'previously interviewing - now listening' researcher that are similar to responses in the initial interview situation, but informed by the analyzing present.

Bird (2005) describes her recollection of being in an interview situation and how it informed the analytic and interpretive choices she was doing while transcribing. Interviewing a non-researching transcriber, Tilley (2003) shows the listening transcriber to be emotionally touched by listening to recorded material and how his listening evokes memories from his own life: "*what he hears on tape sometimes serves as a reminder of those experiences*" (Ibid.:765). Transcription as an analytical and interpretive act has indeed been emphasized (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). In our case, we make explicit use of the listening experience and its evocative potential in the service of data analysis. We might say that new data is collected as we listen to the recorded interview.

The following is an example from the case study on organizational entry processes in a large production company in Denmark (Revsbaek, 2011, 2013, forthcoming). A recently hired and now hiring manager is interviewed. Researcher (author one) is listening to the interview recording some time after the interview.

²⁵ Special thanks from author one to the Complexity and Management Group at Hertfordshire University for letting her visit and participate in the ongoing conversation and inquiry of the community during Spring and Summer 2013.

Case 2: Not everything that comprises the interview situation is in the text

I am listening to her describe handing out the book she has co-written with colleagues in her former workplace to members of the board of directors in her new organization, and thinking that they will benefit from the theoretical perspective introduced in the book. Suddenly her recorded talk evokes the same hypothesis with me as it did in the interview conversation and one I had not kept in mind. Something not actually on the tape comes back to me – similar to what had happened in the interview situation: “Will she be able to connect well enough with the veteran members of the organization or is she deafening herself to possible signals from veteran management coworkers and employees by hiring new people with views similar to her own and preoccupying herself with the changes she wants to introduce?” In a flash, I recognize the (hypothesizing) question in my mind, which resonates with the question raised by Cooper-Thomas & Burke in their 2012 paper: “Newcomer Proactive Behavior: Can There be Too Much of a Good Thing?”

The data concerning the researcher’s evoked response is not a matter of visible, textualized and fixed data (until described in this paper). Still, it very much informs the process of analysis as it feeds into researcher reflexivity. As it turns out, the interview incident, with the evoked hypothesis of newcomer being possibly *too* proactively innovative constitutes a ‘deviant case’ (Flyvbjerg, 2011) relative to the motivating research question of researcher. The researcher is questioning a dominant focus on newcomer assimilation in research on organizational socialization and induction, which largely portrays newcomers as “*unsure*”, “*unaware*”, “*strangers (...) who must learn*”, “*if they are to become accepted and effective*” (Saks & Gruman, 2012:27). Thus, a focus which substantially reflects the discourse in Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) initial work on organizational socialization strategies: “*The more experienced members must therefore find ways to insure that the newcomer does not disrupt the ongoing activity on the scene, embarrass or cast a disparaging light on others, or question too many of the established cultural solutions worked out previously*” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979:211). Instead, the current case study approaches organizational entry processes from a perspective of ‘newcomer innovation’ (Levine, Choi & Moreland, 2003; Revsbaek 2011), perceiving newcomers as possible change agents (Hansen & Levine, 2009): “*firms can use the entry of newcomers to ‘unfreeze’ the workgroup, that is, as an opportunity to rethink work processes, patterns of social interaction, and even the group’s core values and beliefs*” (Feldman, 2012:215). Now, in the

listening present, for the researcher to identify with the concern that the innovation drive of the new manager might be “Too Much of a Good Thing” (Cooper-Thomas & Burke, 2012), the incident inevitably ignites the researcher’s reflexivity, leading her to consider the game of induction ideologies inherent in her research question.

The spontaneous sparking of associations through listening to interview recordings is not constrained by any chosen analytical strategy or even consistent with our current dominant analyses (although related to them in some resonant/dissonant, direct/indirect, significant/insignificant way). They are just as likely to oppose, contest or supplement our strategies. Besides occasioning researcher reflexivity, the repeated listening to recorded interviews throughout the process of analyzing is a way to continuously open up the material, destabilize configuring understanding and/or ‘thickening’ written descriptions of the material.

How might we understand the listening and re-listening to interview recordings as a source of (new) data in the process of analysis? The evocation and weaving of “*flashbacks of lived experience*” that Jegatheesan (2005:667) describes on the basis of her fieldwork experiences resembles the kind of elicited recollections that we attempt to describe by the notion of analyzing in the present. “*Each flashback is a lived experience embraced by the mind, like snapshots, bringing into focus similar phenomena, words, rituals, beliefs, or issues from elsewhere in the past. Each flashback is triggered by the evocation of a sense at the time of observing, speaking, listening, and simply being there at the place of inquiry*” (Ibid.). What we are suggesting here is to think of the process of analyzing as an interpretive practice of the researcher making sense of his/her past experiences (gained through a process of inquiry) while analyzing in the present, dealing with specific empirical materials on hand.

We turn now to explore Mead’s understanding of the ‘specious present’ (Mead, 1932). In a later section, we return to illustrate another case of analyzing in the present while listening to research interview recordings.

Mead and the Present

We have been referring to the experience of ‘getting caught up with’ a specific part of the interview, implying that this experience is fundamental to how we understand analyzing in the present. This creates the evocative potential of listening attentively. As evident from the newcomer manager’s story and the ‘three decades of Springsteen’, our “unreflected expectations” were shattered, triggering our abductive reasoning: “*The world reveals itself to have shattered our unreflected expectations; our habitual actions meet with resistance from the world and rebound back on us. This is the phase of real doubt. And the only way out of this phase is a reconstruction of the interrupted context. Our perception must come to terms with new or different aspects of reality; action (...) must restructure itself*” (Joas, on Pierce’s notion of abductive reasoning, 1996:128-9). This is how we perceive of the

‘breakdown in understanding’ (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011) in our analysis in the present and the elicited associations that help us reconstruct “the interrupted context” (Joas, 1996).

Returning then to the question posed earlier: How might we think of the listening and re-listening to research interviews as a source of (new) data, and of the evoked associations in those moments of ‘getting caught up’ with particular incidents when listening to a research interview? The ‘three decades of Springsteen’ already suggests that analyzing in the present through listening to research interviews and having associations spring to mind, is similar to the experience of recalling past experiences from the standpoint of current concerns, in situations of listening to childhood music in adulthood.

“When one recalls his boyhood days he cannot get into them as he then was, without their relationship to what he has become; and if he could, that is, if he could reproduce the experience as it then took place, he could not use it, for this would involve his not being in the present within which that use must take place” (Mead, 1932:58).

What Mead exemplifies in the account of recalling childhood days in present times is the paradoxical temporality, which is central to his philosophy of time as simultaneously irrevocable and revocable (Ibid.). Mead acknowledges the notion of time’s irrevocability: “*That which has happened is gone beyond recall*” (Mead, 1932:37). But that which we recall as ‘a past’ is only ever looked at from the standpoint of the present. He otherwise states the revocability of time: “*It is idle, at least for the purposes of experience, to have recourse to a “real” past (...) for that past must be set over against a present within which the emergent appears, and the past which must then be looked at from the standpoint of the emergent, becomes a different past (...) It is the “what it was” that changes*” (Ibid.:36-7).

More than for any other social theorist, temporality is central to Mead’s philosophy (Flaherty & Fine, 2001). Mead’s notion of time is “*the most radical of all social science conceptualizations of time*” (Adam 1995, quoted in Flaherty & Fine, 2001:148), though the “*least well elucidated part of his work*” (Joas, 1980/1997:167, quoted in Flaherty & Fine, 2001:148). His notion of the ‘specious present’ relates to his theory of emergence (Joas, 1996). “*The world is a world of events*” (Mead, 1932:1) a “*temporal world*” (Mead 1938, quoted in Flaherty & Fine, 2001:147). Our everyday conception of time is most often in terms of irrevocable linearity moving from a past to present and into a future, with causes preceding effects in temporal determinism. Mead’s notion of time is otherwise paradoxical. Responding to the “ill-conceived” determinism in Watson’s behaviorism (Flaherty & Fine, 2001:149) Mead claimed that any philosophy of the present should account for the appearance of novelty (Ibid.). “*A present (...) is not a*

piece cut out anywhere (...) Its chief reference is to the emergent event, that is, to the occurrence of something which is more than the processes that have led up to it and which by its change, continuance, or disappearance, adds to later passages a content they would not otherwise have possessed” (Mead, 1932:52). “The emergent is itself a conditioning as well as a conditioned factor” (Ibid.:46).

It is said of Mead’s account of the past interpreted in the present that *“the past is a resource”* that we use *“to make sense of the present and imagine the future”* (Flaherty & Fine, 2001:153). More so, the past informs our anticipation, and our anticipation feeds back to select the past that will enable it. In this way, the past is reinterpreted from the standpoint of the emergent event. *“If there is emergence, the reflection of this into the past at once takes place. There is a new past, for from every new rise the landscape that stretches behind us becomes a different landscape”* (Mead, 1932:42). *“The novelty of every future demands a novel past”* (Ibid.:59). This is the insight claimed from acknowledging the simultaneous irrevocability and revocability of time. When making a gesture, we are already anticipating the response, and this very anticipation forms our gesture.

So how do we understand our evoked associations from analyzing in the present? To St. Pierre, inquiry is *“a simultaneity of living, reading, and writing”* (St. Pierre, 2011:621). We found the metaphor of a ‘lived database’ helpful in illustrating the instantaneous associations springing to mind in specific situations of inquiry. A database of our past experiences - all of them - doing empirical work, reading theory, living life, taking part. They are all part of our *repertoire of possible recollections* in any present situation. Furthermore, they are selected from the perspective of our work at the specific time, dealing with specific materials and specific parts of our writing. Mead claims the present as *“the seat of reality”* (Mead, 1932:61), viewing the past and future as hypotheticals to be found in the present as memory and anticipation respectively (Ibid.). The emergent event of the present *“marks out and in a sense selects what has made its peculiarity possible. It creates with its uniqueness a past and a future”* (Mead, 1934:52). The eliciting, small-scale ‘breakdown in understanding’ through listening to an interview is the ‘emergence in the present reflecting into the past’ that ‘selects’ recollections resonating with present experiences.

Accordingly, situating understanding in the reality of the living present, G.H Mead states: *“We carry our analysis as far as the control of subject matter requires, but always with the recognition that what is analyzed out has its reality in the integration of what is taking place”* (Mead, 1932:51). This sensitivity, of situating analysis in what is taking place by ‘analyzing (in) the present’, is what we present in this paper. The use of brackets in the preceding sentence suggests the simultaneous process of ‘analyzing in the present’ (of empirical material/lived experience) and ‘analyzing the present’ in which this analysis takes place.

Analyzing in the present: Ethnographic voice in interview-based study

Writing on the interplay between newcomer, veteran coworker and hiring manager in the case study on organizational entry processes I (Author one), had been struggling for some time to “*arrive at a place of resonant articulation*” (Pelias, 2013:548), portraying the actors’ experience of relating during the period of entry. The following case illustrates how my listening to a recorded interview with the hiring manager informed my analysis of the interplay between him, the veteran employee and the newcomer. The newcomer and veteran coworker are project managers and colleagues in a team of five, led by the interviewed manager. The interview is the second with the manager, following the first interviews three months earlier with each of the three actors. The case is a second entry from the mentioned case study on organizational processes in a large production company in Denmark.

Case 3: Anticipating exclusion of the veteran coworker²⁶

It was the phrase about the resigning veteran having ‘read the writing on the wall’ in the manager’s words, that caused me, as interviewer, to consider and anticipate that he might be talking of the case study veteran coworker. I was interviewing the entry case manager before I planned to meet up with the veteran coworker and newcomer of this particular entry case a second time, three months after my first interviews with each of the three actors. The first thing, the manager did was start talking about a veteran project manager who had left the department since I was last there.

I had recently experienced a case study veteran coworker of another entry case leaving and being replaced by a second coworker within my interview design. In another case, I arrived at the interview with a hiring manager, only to learn there and then, in the interview, that his newcomer had left the company, leaving my inquiries short of a second interview with this newcomer. As it turned out, the rigor of the interview design taught me a valuable lesson about the circumstances of the entry period collaborations in this particular organization. Very often, there was a flow of employees and managers – both newcomers and veterans - entering, leaving or moving to other business units. This was part of everyday life in the

²⁶ The following case narrative was reported in the thesis Chapter 7, and brought here in a revised version aimed at illustrating the methodological argument.

organization and it was part of the collaborations between the newcomers, veteran coworkers and hiring managers that I interviewed.

Having been through these instances of participants resigning, being replaced or just vanishing from my interview design, now faced with the entry case manager reporting that a project manager from his department had left, I feared that this resigned project manager would be the case study veteran coworker. The resigning veteran was said by the manager to have “read the writing on the wall”. He was perceived by the manager as failing to fit the requirements of the new kind of project management required in the department. Apparently noticing this himself, he had applied for a position elsewhere in another company.

Listening to the hiring manager talk in the recorded interview, I am reminded of the uncertainty, in the interview situation, of not yet knowing whether it was *my* veteran coworker who had left the department. Expecting that it might be. I realized in the present of listening to the interview, how the history of my research process with participants resigning and being replaced was informing my perception and anticipation in the interview, as I heard the hiring manager’s opening story of a veteran having left the company.

Having only fleetingly acknowledged these concerns of mine as interviewer at the time, not knowing what I know now, that all three informants of this particular entry case would continue their employment with the organization beyond the case study period, I was then, still listening, instantly reminded of the veteran coworker’s story when I was first interviewing all three. The veteran coworker expressed insecurity. It concerned having two new colleagues arrive in their team at a time of announced future layoffs that might also affect their department. *“Well, we know what’s about to happen”,* he had said about the future layoffs, *“It creates an insecurity at some level ... having two newcomers arrive at the same time”*. *“What tasks will I get?”* Closing off his statement and creating a picture of his professional background as diverging from everyone else’s in the department, he said: *“I feel uncertain about what is going to happen, because, this is just my own self-image but, I am an economist by education and the others are engineers. I was transferred from the business department to*

this department, so this is not really my original field. This means I am left with the fact that, well, I am an economist and the others are engineers."

Still listening to the second interview with the hiring manager, instances from the first interview with the manager spring to mind, resonating with the recalled insecurity expressed by the veteran coworker, as if explaining why the manager's phrase of the resigning veteran having 'read the writing on the wall' would cause me to anticipate that he was talking about case study veteran coworker. The manager had stated in his first interview that he did not regard the department veterans as having the necessary capabilities to transform the departmental practice in the direction he envisioned. He made explicit that the case study veteran coworker lacked 'hands-on logistic expertise', adding that the veteran coworker could learn this from the case study newcomer. A bold statement originally intended to calm company newcomers just a few days into their employment, in the aftermath of the announced future layoffs, was repeated by manager, that any possible layoffs affecting their department would be based on evaluated professional capabilities, and not seniority.

Understanding the dynamic between hiring manager and veteran coworker to be 'tense' and 'unsettled' to some degree, at the time of the first interviews, I was inclined, from the manager's opening story in the second interview three months later, to keep open the option that it might be the case study veteran coworker who had left the department. In the listening present, becoming aware of this anticipation of mine reminded me of the impression from the first round of interviews, of the relations between the newcomer, hiring manager and veteran coworker, as marginalizing the latter.

Reminded that "*we are unable to reveal all that is involved in any present*" (Mead, 1934:54-5), this case story is in part about how our past interactions with specific people inform our present interactions with the same people (Mowles, 2011). In this case, it is the history of interaction in a longitudinal interview design. From listening to the recorded interview in an analyzing present, these fragments of interview material/past experiences are perceived as brought together by association in the eliciting instant of becoming aware of the researcher's anticipation in the interview, raising the question: *Why did I think it might be the veteran coworker resigning?* Instantaneous associations spring to mind of the researcher's prior disappointment in losing other informants and of the impressions from the actors' related

experiences coping with a period of organizational entry. *“There may be and beyond doubt is in any present with its own past a vast deal which we do not discover, and yet this which we do or do not discover will take on different meaning and be different in its structure as an event when viewed from some later standpoint”* (Mead, 1932:40). In this way, part of the prior interviews gained significance through the experience of listening to the second interview and became important in telling a significant story of the case study material.

Having identified the incidents in the recorded interviews that elicited such associations with us, we would then go back to search out these instances in the transcribed text and combine them to tell the story which occurred to us in the analyzing present (much as the presented case, perhaps more elaborate). The aim was to see what narrative would emerge when these pieces of material were put together and how this informed our overall analysis. In doing so, we construct an ethnographic account of interview-based data, taking the interviewer into account as a participant. In this way, we perceive analyzing in the present, listening to recorded interview material, as a starting point for reflexive writing allowing *“researchers to turn back on themselves, to examine how their presence or stance functions in relationship to their subject”* (Pelias, 2013:554). In this sense, researcher reflexivity is an integral part of the process of analysis informing all evaluation, rather than a final stage in a linear progressing and sequenced research.

From ‘data’ to ‘empirical material’ to ‘the living present’

“The act of interpreting implies that something is there, a text in the world, waiting to be discovered or approximated (see Daft & Weick, 1984). Sensemaking, however, is less about discovery than it is about invention. To engage in sensemaking is to construct, filter, frame, create facticity (Turner, 1987), and render the subjective into something more tangible” (Weick, 1995:13-14).

Embracing post-modern epistemological challenges within the practices of qualitative inquiry, Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) state that they prefer the term ‘empirical material’ rather than ‘data’ as they depart from ‘dataistic’ methodologies. In their approach of ‘mystery as method’, Alvesson and Kärreman argue that working with empirical material is not a matter of the correct representation of data and reality, but of constructing empirical material as the ‘critical dialogue partner’ for challenging existing theory and thinking, bringing about a ‘breakdown of understanding’ eliciting abductive reasoning (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). We have found their notion of ‘breakdown in understanding’ useful with respect to the eliciting specificity of listening to an interview recording, the ‘getting caught up with’ an incident, which constitutes a challenge to our current habitual thinking, causing the sparks of association across material and prior experiences. We should emphasize, though, that Alvesson and Kärreman warn that a ‘breakdown in understanding’ should be cultivated or converted into a ‘mystery’ confronting

traditions of thought and current research in the field in question, before being dealt with as the eliciting potential to drive theory development. In our work, we found that not all written materials produced from ‘analyzing in the present’ of listening to interview recordings proved central or important to our research. Rather than framing the entire research process in terms of generalized ‘breakdowns in understanding’ or ‘mysteries’, we use situational abductive reasoning to produce written empirical material inclusive of the researcher as participant.

”The research process must, as much as possible, find ways to *trace its own entanglements* in the system that it engages. This is not just a question about hypervigilant attunement to one’s footprint in the system(s), nor just about recording transactions as observantly and reflexively as possible. It is also about representing the materials and knowledge produced through the research, as well as the process through which they were produced, in ways that clearly delineate the researcher’s presence, voice and framing. A narrative is always somebody’s narrative” (Fenwick, Edwards & Sawchuk, 2011:43-44)

Situating analysis as ‘analyzing in the present’ is just such a way of delineating the researcher’s presence and tracing entanglements within the research process.

Moving from ‘data’ to instead considering ‘empirical material’, as Alvesson and Kärreman advocate (2011), concedes the social construction of research material, but leaves the notion of analysis as a matter of relationship between subject and object (and the community of inquirers), without attributing any mentionable consequence to the passage of *time*. Kärreman writes on his own ethnographic work, that in the end, he only used five percent of all material gathered throughout his doctoral study (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). Yet, we argue that the empirical ‘material’ feeding into our work far exceeds the bits of data presented directly in our final texts. Keeping in mind that ‘material’ is a reifying choice of words on what makes up the substance of our inquiries, we suggest instead that 100 percent of a researcher’s “material” goes into choosing and interpreting the incidents that are made focal to our analysis. The way this 100 percent goes into our analysis and interpretation is in being part of our *lived experience* and of our past, evoked and recalled in the present of analyzing where we deal with specific parts of the material. These evoked recollections in the living present of analysis are patterning associations across memories and material. Perceiving the process of analyzing in this way allows for an integration of ‘transgressive data’ in analysis, not only as an ‘add-on’ to more codifiable and reifiable data, but as the *medium of all data*.

“It is of course evident that the materials out of which that past is constructed lie in the present. I refer to the memory images and the evidences by which we build up the past, and to the fact that any

reinterpretation of the picture we form of the past will be found in a present, and will be judged by the logical and evidential characters which such data possess in a present” (Mead, 1932:57).

We suggest that it is helpful to think of the process of analysis in terms of ‘the living present’ and researcher understanding from past experiences, faced with present issues anticipating a future outcome of the work. Situating our inquiry in the present of analysis, thus being ethnographers to the experience of listening to our recorded material, is a radical reflexive stand toward interview analysis in which researcher is bringing her recollection of past experiences (during the process of inquiry) to bear on what she is listening to and trying to understand in the present of analyzing.

We argued earlier that it is likely to add to the ‘transgressive data’ of listening to interview recordings, if the researcher herself has conducted the recorded interviews. In a similar way, the value of approaching empirical material in the analyzing present, explicating the interdependency between researcher and researched, is likely to increase when the research is built “*on questions and problems that are of genuine interest to the researcher herself*” (Brinkmann, 2012:ix). “*What you use is your own life and your own experience in the world*” (Lave in Lave & Kvale 1995, quoted in Brinkmann 2012:49). St. Pierre (2011) challenges the concept of ‘data’ from the sensitivity of post-structural thinking, beyond replacing a notion of ‘brute data’ with a notion of ‘empirical material’. Data is that with which we think, she claims, making no distinction between the words of informants and those of theorists (Ibid.).

“I imagine a cacophony of ideas swirling as we think about our topics with all we can muster – with words from theorists, participants, conference audiences, friends and lovers, ghosts who haunt our studies, characters in fiction and film and dreams” (St. Pierre, 2011:622).

In our notion of ‘analyzing in the present’ this ‘cacophony of swirling ideas’ responds to some eliciting specificity in the analytical present of the researcher listening to an interview recording and getting caught up with a particular incident. The cacophony of swirling ideas becomes a momentary narrative, a responding pattern of associations, in a living present of the researcher analyzing and understanding the work at hand. We suggest that the ‘eliciting’ of associations (which are essentially memories of reading, writing, listening, watching, taking part etc.) happens in situations of ‘breakdown-in-understanding’ (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011), as we ‘stumble’ (Brinkmann, 2014), requiring abductive reasoning on behalf of researcher. The notion of ‘analyzing in the present’ emphasize that the most interesting aspects of our empirical material (recorded interviews, transcribed text, field notes etc.) is not *in* our material, but in our *encounter* with the material.

Concluding remarks

A colleague suggested the metaphor for identifying the described method of analysis: “*You are ethnographers of your empirical material*”²⁷. In the process of analyzing by listening to interview recordings, experiences of being in the interviews, reading through the transcripts and listening to other parts of the interview recordings all informed our analysis in the sense that they were part of our repertoire of possible re-collections. These were then iteratively reinterpreted in the light of the analyzing present in which we found ourselves. It is that which happens between you as a listening researcher, and the interview listened to, that makes up the analyzing present.

We found that our patterning associations across the material were more vivid and rich in periods of intense work and immersion with the empirical material. The associations afforded us in such a present of analyzing took into account everything that we had experienced, though selectively chosen from what we were trying to understand at the time.

The notion of ‘analyzing in the present’ contributes to the ongoing debate of ‘troubling’ data and method (St. Pierre 1997, 2011; Tanggaard, 2013; Brinkmann, 2014) in emphasizing that the substance of our qualitative inquiries - rather than considered as ‘data’ to be found ‘out there’ detached from us - is our *lived experiences* (during the process of inquiry and beyond) *as recalled by us in the present of analysis/understanding*. Throughout the paper we have illustrated an autobiographic approach toward interview analysis.

In the reverberation of a notion of ‘analyzing in the present’, where do we go next? Firstly, from our experience of the simultaneous doing of research and emergence of methodology, and in resonance with Mills’ famous suggestion to “*let every man be his own methodologist*” (Mills 1959, p.224, quoted in Brinkmann, 2012:49), we encourage qualitative researchers to do breakdown-driven accounts of their actual research practices as these emerge in specific research projects – much as we did ourselves from the practice of extensive listening to research interviews. Writing on such methodological breakdowns-in-understanding, brought about from applying (traditional) research methods while framing our inquiries in terms of emerging philosophies of science²⁸, hold much promise for the development of methodology.

²⁷ We would like to thank Charlotte Wegener for lively collegial dialogues: You have a rare talent for making researchers out of human beings, and human beings out of researchers.

²⁸ Mead’s process philosophy of emergence is hardly an *emerging* philosophy. But emerging complexity theory (Stacey, 2010; 2012; Griffin, 2002; Mowles, 2011) and quantum physics (Barad, 2007) approaches in social science are currently finding much resonance with the

Secondly, a notion of ‘analyzing in the present’, as presented in this paper have implications for how we understand validity, making validity a matter of *resonating experiences*. Such implications need to be further explored if a notion of ‘analyzing in the present’ is to be elaborated.

It seems only natural, in our future situations of analysis, to attempt to include others in the process of ‘analyzing in the present’ while listening to the recorded material. To ask interviewees to add their analysis in a (shared) present of listening. Added to this, it would be relevant to think of other situations, such as research reporting or teaching, in terms of ‘analyzing in the present’ in order to understand the situational dynamics of such practices. And as is hinted in the case of taking an “ethnographic voice in interview-based study” the practice of interviewing itself, and interviewer responsiveness, could be understood from the notion of ‘analyzing in the present’, as could ethnographic field observations and interactions, thus facilitating autobiographic accounts of engaging in such research practices.

We have attempted to demonstrate how our understanding of the process of analysis in terms of ‘analyzing in the present’ emerged from a practice of extensive listening to interview recordings. We do not mean to suggest that such analysis could not be evoked from reading through transcripts, watching videos, writing text. We only argue that the listening made us aware of this process of remembering and recalling.

Parallel to calls for extensive reading of theory and literature (St. Pierre, 2011) and for writing (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005) in the process of analyzing data, our call is for re-listening to recorded interviews and events. We propose listening and re-listening to interview recordings as a practice aiding “*the creative moment in the interpretative process*” (Brinkman, 2012:46). Listening that is not motivated deliberately by not knowing or not having listened to the interview before, but just by listening, although (at first) thinking you have a (clear) sense of what the interview is about in relation to everything else in your work. Yet listening to it again, while driving to work, going on the tube or train to and from work, doing the dishes after tucking in the kids before returning to do your last writing of the day, has much to offer. The work we do, when we are not truly working, the ordering and re-ordering we do when we are not consciously ordering and re-ordering things, are all part of this process. You have your whole body, your whole memory, your whole sense of what your study is about, interpreting the significance of some incidents in the interviews, compared to others, at specific times of listening, marking where you are currently with your work and how this resonates with specific incidents in the recorded material. It is a listening that teaches you about both your research material and the constituting relationship between them and you, as a researcher engaged in understanding your field of research. It is particularly compelling to notice why you

pragmatist philosophies and are being applied throughout social and human sciences (for an overview see Fenwick, et. al., 2011).

come to reflect on certain things when listening to a certain sequence in an interview. It is all about researcher reflexivity integrated into the analysis of material rather than being a retrospective 'add-on' to a completed research process. Enjoy!

References

- Alvesson, M. & Kärreman, D. (2011). *Qualitative Research and Theory Development. Mystery as Method*. London: Sage.
- Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. US: Duke University Press.
- Bird, C. M. (2005). How I stopped dreading and learned to love transcription, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(2), 226-248. doi: 10.1177/1077800404273413
- Brinkmann, S. (2012). *Qualitative Inquiry in Everyday Life. Working with Everyday Life Materials*. London: Sage.
- Brinkmann, S. (2014). Doing without data, *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 20(6), pp. 720-725.
- Cooper-Thomas, H.D., & Burke, S.E. (2012): Newcomer Proactive Behavior: Can There be Too Much of a Good Thing? In C.R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 56-77). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Elias, N. (1994/2000). *The Civilizing Process. Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*. E. Dunning, J. Goudsblom & S. Mennel (Eds). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Feldman, D.C. (2012). The impact of socializing newcomers on insiders. In C.R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 215-229). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fenwick, T., Edwards, R., & Sawchuk, P. (2011). *Emerging Approaches to Educational Research. Tracing the Sociomaterial*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Flaherty, M., & Fine, G.A. (2001). Present, past, and future: Conjugating George Herbert Mead's perspective on time, *Time & Society*, 10(2/3), 147-161.

- Flyvbjerg, B. (2011). Case Study. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 301-316). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Griffin, D. (2002). *The emergence of leadership. Linking self-organization and ethics*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Hansen, T. & Levine, J.M. (2009). Newcomers as change agents: Effects of newcomers' behavioral style and teams' performance optimism, *Social Influence*, 4(1), 46-61.
- Hasse, C. (2011). *Kulturanalyse i organisationer. Begreber, metoder og forbløffende læreprocesser*. Kbh., DK: Samfundslitteratur.
- Jegatheesan, B. I. (2005). I see the stars: An autoethnographer speaks on fieldwork and flashbacks, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(5), 667-688. doi: 10.1177/1077800405276810
- Joas, H. (1996). *The Creativity of Action* (Edition from 2005). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Lapadat, J., & Lindsay, A. (1999). Transcription in research and practice: From standardization of technique to interpretive positionings, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 5, 64-86.
- Lave, J. & Kvale, S. (1995). What is anthropological research? An interview with Jean Lave by Steiner Kvale, *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8, 219-228.
- Levine, J.M., Choi, H.-S., & Moreland, R.L. (2003). Newcomer innovation in work teams. In P.B. Paulus & B.A. Nijstad (Eds), *Group creativity: Innovation through collaboration* (pp. 202-224). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mead, G.H. (1932). *The Philosophy of the Present* (this edition 2002). Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books. (Originally published: Chicago: Open Court Pub).
- Mead, G.H. (1934). *Mind, Self, and Society. From the standpoint of as social behaviorist*. C.W. Morris (Ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Mowles, C. (2011). *Rethinking Management. Radical Insights from the Complexity Sciences*. Surrey, UK: Gower Publishing.
- Pelias, R.J. (2013). Writing into position: Strategies for composition and evaluation. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, 4th Ed. (pp. 547-568). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Peräkylä, A., & Ruusuvuori, J. (2011). Analyzing talk and text. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 529-543). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Revsbaek, L. (2011). Medarbejderintroduktion – Et bidrag til organisatorisk innovation. In N. Stegeager & E. Laursen (Eds) *Organisationer i bevægelse*. Kbh., DK: Samfundslitteratur.
- Revsbaek, L. (2013a). *Researching organizational entry from a perspective of newcomer innovation*. Conference paper, the anual DGfE conference, Commission of Organizational Education, Marburg, Germany, 2013.
- Revsbaek, L. (2013b). Modtagelsessamspillet lokale økologi. *Academic Quarter, Humanistic Leadership Research*, vol.6, pp. 175-186. DK: Aalborg University.
- Richardson, L., & St. Pierre, E.A. (2005). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd Ed. (pp.959-978). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Saks, A.M., & Gruman, J.A. (2012). Getting newcomers on board: A review of socialization practices and introduction to socialization resources theory. In C.R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization* (pp. 27-55). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Springsteen, B. (1987). *Tunnel of Love*. Studio album. CBS Records.
- St. Pierre, E.A. (1997). Methodology in the fold and the irruption of transgressive data, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10(2), 175-189.
- St. Pierre, E.A. (2011). Post qualitative research: The critique and the coming after. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th Ed. (pp. 611-625). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stacey, R.D. (2010). *Complexity and Organizational Reality. Uncertainty and the Need to Rethink Management after the Collapse of Investment Capitalism*, 2nd Ed. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Stacey, R.D. (2012). *Tools and Techniques of Leadership and Management. Meeting the Challenge of Complexity*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Tanggaard, L. (2013). Troubling methods in qualitative inquiry and beyond, *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 9(3), 1-99.

- Tilley, S.A. (2003). "Challenging" research practices: Turning a critical lens on the work of transcription, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(5), 750-773. doi:10.1177/1077800403255296
- Van Maanen, J., & Schein, E.H. (1979). Toward a theory of organizational socialization. In B.M. Staw (Ed.), *Research in Organizational Behavior*, (vol.1, pp. 209-264). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Weick, K.E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, London: Sage.

Appendix 1: Introductory letter for interviewees



Department of Education,
Learning and Philosophy
Fibigerstræde 10
DK-9220 Aalborg East
Denmark

Phone +45 9940 9960
Fax +45 9815 6542
learning@learning.aau.dk
www.learning.aau.dk

Line Revsbæk
Ph.D.-Fellow & Cand Psych.
Direct phone +45 2245 1420

Aalborg, October 8th 2010

Dear interviewee,

Thank you for considering participation in two individual interviews in relation to the ph.d.-research project at Aalborg University, Denmark, on "*The innovation potential of new employees entering into an organization*".

The project aims at understanding the organizational entry of new employees as an opportunity for innovation in the organization and explores facilitators and potential barriers for innovative collaboration between newcomers and colleagues and superiors in the organization.

The first interview is targeted to be held after 1 month of occupation by the newcomer and a second, follow up interview is targeted to be held after 4 months of occupation. Both the newcomer, the newcomer's superior and a close colleague to the newcomer is interviewed individually in these approximate periods of time in order to understand the complex nature of the collaboration concerning facilitating the organizational entry for the newcomer.

The research project is interested in learning about your experience (both as a newcomer, as a colleague to the newcomer and as a superior to the newcomer) from

the actual organizational entry process as it enrolls, and therefore hopes for your participation in the interviews.

About the interview

- Each interview has a duration of one and a half hour
- The interview will be held at your workplace, and conducted in English or Danish after your preference
- You and the researcher from Aalborg University will be present in the interview.
- The interview will be recorded on tape for research use only

Confidentiality

All data from the interview will be held confidential, and any reference to empirical data in future publications will be done anonymously in accordance to personal data.

On behalf of the research project,

Line Revsbæk
Ph.D. Fellow & Cand. Psych.
Aalborg University

The PhD.-project is developed at Aalborg University, Denmark,
on a scholarship co-financed between Aalborg University and Mercuri Urval A/S.

Appendix 2: Facts box on case study entry cases

Business Unit X: 'PRODUCTION'

Case X1 HR Department	Newcomer: <i>Job function:</i> HR Partner. <i>Professional background:</i> HR IT-designer, process facilitator. Veteran coworker: <i>Job function:</i> HR Partner. <i>Seniority:</i> 10 years. <i>Professional background:</i> Business trained assistant. Hiring manager: <i>Job function:</i> Department Manager. <i>Seniority:</i> 7 months. <i>Professional background:</i> Management consultant
Specifics	Hiring manager recently employed. Hiring manager and newcomer know each other from shared former workplace. Newcomer and veteran coworker do not share work/task responsibility. Veteran coworker leaves the company during the case study period. Hiring manager leaves the company at the end of the case study period.

Case X2 Supply Chain Product Development	Newcomer: <i>Job function:</i> Technical Assistant. <i>Professional background:</i> Graphic designer in product development Veteran coworker: <i>Job function:</i> Project Manager. <i>Seniority:</i> 2,4 years. <i>Professional background:</i> Engineer, production development. Hiring manager: <i>Job function:</i> Department Manager. <i>Seniority:</i> 4 months. <i>Professional background:</i> Engineer, production management, international experience.
Specifics	Newcomer employed in newly established job function. Newcomer do not share job function with veteran coworker. Newcomer share tasks with veteran coworker (as assistant and project manager). Hiring manager is recently employed. Decision to establish the job function of technical assistant is made prior to hiring

	manager's employment with the organization.
Case X3	
Supply Chain Management	<p>Newcomer: <i>Job function:</i> Project Manager. <i>Professional background:</i> Engineer, strategic project manager.</p> <p>Veteran coworker: <i>Job function:</i> Project Manager. <i>Seniority:</i> 2,4 years. <i>Professional background:</i> Business economy, strategic management development</p> <p>Hiring manager: <i>Job function:</i> Department Manager. <i>Seniority:</i> 5 months. <i>Professional background:</i> Engineer, production management, international experience.</p>
Specifics	Hiring manager recently employed. Hiring manager and newcomer know each other from shared former workplace. Newcomer and veteran coworker share work/task responsibility.

Business Unit Y: 'SALES'

Case Y1	
Legal Department	<p>Newcomer: <i>Job function:</i> Legal Advisor. <i>Professional background:</i> Lawyer, Company Legal Advisor in other companies.</p> <p>Veteran coworker: <i>Job function:</i> Legal Advisor. <i>Seniority:</i> 2 years. <i>Professional background:</i> Lawyer in external consultancy.</p> <p>Hiring manager: <i>Job function:</i> Department Manager. <i>Seniority:</i> 4 years. <i>Professional background:</i> Lawyer in external consultancy</p>
Specifics	Newcomer is of different nationality than hiring manager and veteran coworker. Newcomer is located in office abroad as the only department representative. Manager and veteran coworker are located in the Danish headquarter. Newcomer and veteran coworker do not share work/task responsibility during entry. Newcomer leaves the company during the case study period.

<p>Case Y2</p> <p>Supply Chain Management</p>	<p>Newcomer: <i>Job function:</i> Purchasing support. <i>Professional background:</i> Educated in Business Administration, 20 years work experience across 5-6 companies working within purchasing. Veteran coworker: <i>Job function:</i> Customer Service Coordinator. <i>Seniority:</i> 3 years. <i>Professional background:</i> Officer in the Danish Military. Hiring manager: <i>Job function:</i> Department Manager. <i>Seniority:</i> 1,5 years. <i>Professional background:</i> Finance, background in purchasing.</p>
<p>Specifics</p>	<p>Newcomer is of different nationality than hiring manager and veteran coworker. Newcomer is located in office abroad as the only department representative. Manager and veteran coworker are located in the Danish headquarter. Veteran coworker references to another manager. Newcomer and veteran coworker share task responsibility during entry. Hiring manager leaves the company during the case study period. Newcomer leaves the company at the end of the case study period.</p>

<p>Case Y3</p> <p>Department of technical sales support</p>	<p>Newcomer: <i>Job function:</i> Technical supporter and analyst. <i>Professional background:</i> Ph.D. in Mathematics. Veteran coworker: <i>Job function:</i> Technical supporter. <i>Seniority:</i> 5 years. <i>Professional background:</i> Master in Geophysics, Geophysicist in two former workplaces. Hiring manager: <i>Job function:</i> Department Manager. <i>Seniority:</i> 7 years in the company, 4 years as manager. <i>Professional background:</i> Ph.D., Engineering.</p>
<p>Specifics</p>	<p>The employing department is restructured during the case study period. Newcomer and veteran coworker ends up in two different departments with different managers.</p>

Appendix 3

Interview recordings attached thesis submission

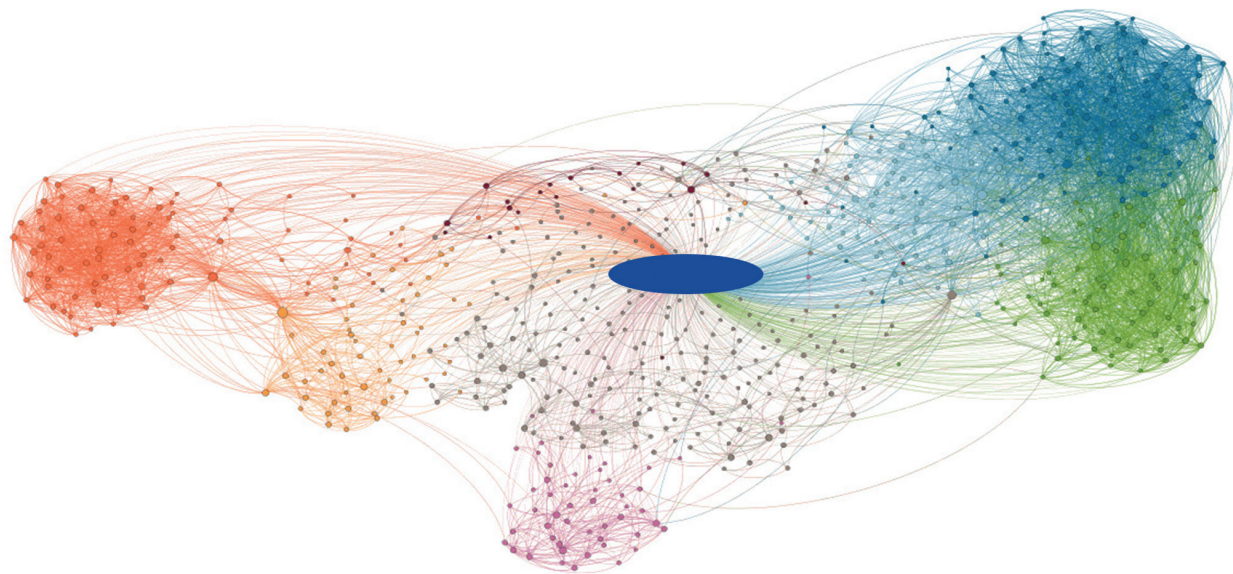
Due to the vast epistemological diversity within the continuum of qualitative inquiry (Ellingson, 2011), ranging from realist to performative and interpretive approaches, I feel compelled to make a brief remark with regard to my decision to include in the thesis submission, the audio recording of the case study research interviews, rather than the transcribed interview texts.

I have not handed in my interview transcriptions, as I view – and believe myself to have made a strong argument for doing so – that the real ‘data’ of this inquiry is *between me and the recorded material*, as I attend to the latter in the process of analysis, in writing and in listening. My work and analysis, therefore, is not to be evaluated on some measure of cross-referenced coding of transcribed material with peers agreeing on codes or categorizations, measured in units of meaning. Far more so, should it be evaluated in terms of the consistency of the argument and the resonant experience of the reader.

I do, though, consider myself obliged to document the existence of these case study interviews, as I place a strong emphasis in the work on my past experiences from being in the case study interview conversations and re-experiencing the recordings of them in the process of analysis. Therefore, the interview recordings are included.

Attaching the recorded interviews to the thesis submission is only to document the existence of the research interviews, and so that the evaluation committee members can familiarize themselves with them in the process of evaluating this doctoral work. The recorded interviews should not be used for any other purpose than this. The interview recordings must be treated with the greatest confidentiality, out of consideration for the anonymity of case study participants and the case organization. The recordings are not to be distributed or made public in any way, and Aalborg University is obliged through a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with the case organization to maintain this confidentiality.

The interviews with newcomer Y1 and newcomer Y2 are in English. Other interviews are in Danish.



SUMMARY

In her doctoral thesis Line Revsbaek explores newcomer innovation related to organizational entry processes in a changing organization. She introduces process philosophy and complexity theory to research on organizational socialization and newcomer innovation. The study challenges assumptions in standardized induction programs where newcomers are cast in roles as insecure novices needing to be “taught the ropes” of the organizational culture. Linked with this, it is suggested that the prevailing dichotomy of ‘newcomer assimilation’ versus ‘organizational accommodation’ is replaced with a notion of ‘adjusting to the emergent’. Newcomer innovation is portrayed as carrying a variety of possible significations, such as unintentional innovation effects of newcomer’s proactive self-socializing behavior; an inspirational basis for designing innovation-generating employee induction; ‘resonant instances’ of newcomers enacting the organizational emergent.

The study throws light on the informal socialization in work-related interactions between newcomers and veterans and reveals professional relational histories, as well as the relationship between veteran coworker and hiring manager, to be important aspects of the social ecology of newcomer entry. The study makes a contribution to interpretive qualitative research methodology in taking a radical reflexive and autobiographic stance toward analyzing conventional interview material in a practice of Analyzing in the Present.